

Sect. M  
14216 B

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY  
OF  
ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

★ ★ ★

1 JANUARY, 1943 - 31 MARCH, 1943  
PG NUMBERS 31523 - 31526

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
CLASSIFIED LIBRARY  
RECEIVED  
FEB 5 1954  
Copy number 1

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED BY 100-1000-01-1000-1000  
DECLASSIFICATION OF THIS RECORD

1

1



1

1



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 January - 31 March 1943

PG Numbers 31523 - 31526

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

Editorial Note:

The translation of this German War Diary was made in London, England, under the guidance of Commander S. I. 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.

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 JANUARY, 1943

PG/31523

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

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

Editorial Note:

The translation of this German War Diary was made in London, England, under the guidance of Commander S. C. Sanders, U.S.N. When his London Office was closed and the translation project was discontinued, such unfinished material was sent to Naval History Division, (CP-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.

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

1 January, 1943

Simferopol

- 1158 There was an air raid warning at Ivan Baba. The enemy was driven off by an anti-aircraft barrage. No damage caused.
- 1147 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that air reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea had to be broken off because the plane developed engine trouble. No sighting reports. Reconnaissance over the central Black Sea had to be canceled owing to the weather.
- 1520 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported an enemy submarine 4 km. southwest of Cape Myshako, course west.
- 1800 Commanding Admiral, Crimea wished to investigate whether the defense of the bays in the coastal sector Sevastopol-Khersonese could be improved by minelaying. Because it would endanger our own shipping which is obliged to proceed directly off the bays, the general mining of the bays had to be refused. On the other hand orders were given to mine the pier in Strelitzkaya Bay. The Army was given the following explanation:
- a. Observation has revealed that only Strelitzkaya Bay and Kruglaya Bay are suitable for large-scale landings.
  - b. The effect of sea mines laid in the bays and their approaches, even in large quantities, should not be overestimated. Furthermore, moored mines in relatively shallow water are bound to be torn from their moorings by the tide, thus not only reducing the effectiveness of the minefields but gravely endangering shipping (vessels and lighters) off Sevastopol, vital to the supply of Army Group A.
- For these reasons the use of sea mines will have to be abandoned. Mining the quay-sides in Strelitzkaya Bay with contact mines is a possibility, however, since steamers are able to draw alongside there. Moreover, plans for coastal guns for Sevastopol will again be investigated in order that the bays may be defended by concentrated gunfire.
- 2325 Port Commander 25 reported that he had withdrawn west of Elista according to plan and had sustained no damage of any significance.

CONFIDENTIAL

2 January, 1943

Simferopol

- 1747 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that air reconnaissance over the eastern Black Sea had to be broken off owing to engine trouble. No sighting reports. No enemy shipping was observed in the central Black Sea.
- 1951 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that enemy surface forces were not intercepted in transmission. On 1 January also, radio silence prevailed. According to radio intercept reports, at 1900 there was a destroyer at sea in an unidentified position in radio communication with a station on the southeast coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

3 January, 1943

Simferopol

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A transmitted the following questionnaire:

"Armed Forces High Command need the following data for their general survey:

1. What naval forces are available to take part in the event of landings? Where is their base and what general plans has Admiral, Black Sea for their employment in the future?
2. What defenses, e.g. minefields, are there against enemy landings off Theodosia, Yalta, Balaklava etc.?
3. Have the moles at Theodosia been repaired again and do they now offer good opportunities for the disembarkation of tanks etc.?
4. During the coming period U-boat operations as close to the south coast of the Crimea as possible would be desirable. Likewise increased and continuous reconnaissance between Theodosia and Novorossisk.
5. Because of enemy pressure on the Don and the Manych as well as on the Terek and from Kalmuk steppe, the Army is expecting landings between Theodosia and Kerch Strait, also from the Taman Peninsula to Novorossisk in the near future."

0558 Naval Liaison Officer's enquiry was answered as follows:

- "1. In the event of enemy landings, E-boats should be able to operate quite successfully at night from Ivan Baba and Italian E-boats from Yalta, in seas up to force 3.
2. It is proposed to repeat E-boat reconnaissance, in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 5492/42, as often as possible during the following nights. High seas have recently prevented boats from putting out.
3. A U-boat will operate in the southeastern Black Sea in order to intercept the enemy as he leaves the harbors.
4. The harbor entrance, moles and berths at Theodosia will be protected with contact mines plus an anti-torpedo net.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

5. Yalta will be protected by a minefield and an anti-torpedo net; Italian E-boats will carry out patrols off the Crimean coast during the night.
6. There are anti-torpedo nets at Balaklava.
7. At Sevastopol there is a boom defense and a net barrage. The mining of the moles of Strelitzkaya Bay with contact mines has been ordered.
8. The moles at Theodosia have been partially restored. The north mole is ready for blowing up. The destruction of the moles, as last year, is in itself no real obstacle to landings. The places thus destroyed may be easily bridged by placing suitable vehicles across them.
9. The reconnaissance of Theodosia/Novorossisk by day can only be carried out by the Air Force."

1155

I submitted the following situation report to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A:

1. After its earlier training period the Russian Fleet has been unusually active since the beginning of December. The object of this activity is obviously against German supply traffic either off the west coast or making for Sevastopol. No minelaying operations have been detected so far. On the other hand the routine submarine operations are remarkably quick to adapt themselves to German escort and convoy traffic, so that the routes used and particularly the approach points have to be constantly changed.
2. With little variation, Russian supply traffic off the east coast is divided equally between Tuapse and Ghelenjik. It includes warships from the destroyer downwards and also numerous midget craft, specially for landings at Ghelenjik.
3. The German-occupied coast between Theodosia and Anapa was surveyed almost daily by M.T.B.s and planes in combined operations.
4. German air reconnaissance and radio intelligence was hampered by the weather and the short days and the enemy's maintenance of radio silence.

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

5. Own Situation: 1 or 2 U-boats on an average operating between the central and the southern east coast. E-boats patrol the northern east coast and also the coastal waters from the south coast of the Crimea to Anapa. E-boat operations are largely dependent on the weather. Their target is enemy supply traffic and naval forces. The enemy evades E-boat operations by sending supplies by day when E-boats cannot operate.
6. Enemy movements, apart from coastal reconnaissance as reported under 3), at present offer no clear indication of major landing plans; on the other hand there are no signs to prove that a landing is not intended.
7. The normal operations of German naval forces and the defense measures in the harbors are being undertaken bearing the possibility of a landing in mind."

1150 Since, according to Army information, a major enemy landing is to be expected in the Theodosia/Novorossisk area, 2 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to take up patrol positions from 1700 between air grid square 6525 and 7565 and to enter port again at daybreak.

Two boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla were also ordered to reconnoiter between air grid square 4557 and 4545 and to enter Yalta at daybreak.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea was ordered to send 2 naval ferry barges to take up patrol positions in Theodosia Bay.

1807 Air Force Staff, Crimea obtained no sighting reports of enemy naval forces. Planes were several times prevented from operating because of engine trouble.

1900 "Most Immediate, Most Immediate" was sent to all commands:

- "1. Expect destroyers in central Black Sea.
2. Naval Shore Commanders ordered 'increased operational readiness'.
3. Naval forces escorting Naval Training Command convoys will wait for the results of morning reconnaissance."

CONFIDENTIAL

-5-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

The following point was behind this order:

At 0900 in the forenoon Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza had intercepted the destroyer reported by radio intercept service in the southeastern Black Sea. At 1640 this destroyer was off the central east coast. At 1625 Port Commander, Yalta reported that, at 1745, about 15 km. south of the coastal observation station Kutchuk Lambat, a sudden great flash of light and a concentration of searchlights were observed on the horizon several times. This fact, combined with the report that the enemy had maintained radio silence for two days, led to the supposition that Russian naval forces were at sea and might possibly imperil convoy traffic planned for the next day.

- 1937 Main Naval D/F Station, Theodosia reported that a bearing of 184° was obtained on a Russian mine vessel which could be heard very distinctly. This bearing confirms the fact that shipping is being threatened by Russian naval forces.
- 2000 The 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that the two E-boats which had put out on patrol were obliged to return to Ivan Baba at 1930 owing to the weather.
- 2035 U 9 reported that she had commenced her return passage because her torpedo tubes were out of order.

According to the report of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes dated 30 December, Army Group A is going to withdraw the front; this would mean that the units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes would also have to withdraw. With reference to this matter Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A informed us that after the front had been shortened, the Army Group intended also to entrust Naval Shore Commander's units with defense tasks. Today he continued by suggesting to transport all Naval Shore Commander's stores by rail to Mariupol.

On my behalf the Naval Liaison Officer requested Army Group A to allocate an area to the Naval Shore Commander where all units, including Port Commander 35 recently operating near Elista, might be assembled. There was no objection to defense tasks being undertaken. The value of assembling Naval Shore Commander's units would be purely in the interests of training.

In addition I proposed today that Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and his Port Commanders be reserved for the coastal defense of Anapa-Novorossisk and be transferred accordingly to that area.

CONFIDENTIAL

4 January, 1943

Simferopol

0850 Italian E-boats on patrol during the night off the coast near Yalta put in to port without having sighted anything.

1130 The order for "increased operational readiness", issued yesterday to Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea/Ukraine and Caucasus, has been canceled since no fresh intelligence on the enemy has come in.

2045 At 1720 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the destroyer identified at 1640 on 3 January was still at sea.

At 1830, according to radio traffic, the destroyer was thought to be off Poti and Batum.

At 2010 the large destroyer "Charkov" was, according to radio traffic, in the same area as the destroyer reported at 1830. The Russian vessels, surmised to have been at sea during the last two days, seem to be returning to their bases again.

2115 Air reconnaissance was impeded by the weather. At 1306, 60 miles west of Sochi, 2 torpedoboats were reported, course 100°, high speed. Otherwise nothing to report.

In Kerch, at present, 7,000 tons of shipping are in readiness for the increased supply traffic for Army Group A. Half this space is at present used for military supplies. More lighters are on the way.

2330 Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that as regards the Army withdrawal, all the transports requested will have been transferred from their former headquarters to Essentuki by noon on 4 January according to plan. Because unloading space could not be provided promptly and because the routes were blocked, the following materials were lost:

Approximately 80,000 rounds of 2 cm. anti-aircraft ammunition.  
Approximately 800 rounds of 7.5 FK 16/M/A.  
Approximately 450 empty petrol tanks.  
Some field-gray articles of clothing.  
Barrack equipment and some 600 bunks.

CONFIDENTIAL

-7-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

When on 30 December Army Group A gave the order that Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes was to be moved back, the 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion was, at the urgent request of Army Group A, still on operations with the 1st Panzer Army. It was therefore quite simple to place the Naval Motor Transport Battalion at the disposal of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes. Not until the night of 3 January was the last platoon of the above battalion released by the Army.

CONFIDENTIAL

--8--

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

5 January, 1943

Simferopol

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A proposed that Port Commander 23, who was in charge of the supply depot of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes in Voroshilovsk, transfer to Mariupol together with Port Commander 25 after the depot had been loaded away. Both Commanders will be released by Army Group A between 10 and 15 January. As long as he continues operating with Army H.Q. I (Tanks) it would only be possible to withdraw Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes as part of a general withdrawal of the whole front. According to information from Chief, Army Group A his release could not be considered until the end of January. He further indicated that it was at present difficult to judge how far the present Army situation endangered the naval supply depot at Rostov.

Furthermore, Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A telephoned that Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus intended to take over the defense of the Taman Peninsula.

In reply I stated that should Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus undertake the defense of the Taman Peninsula, his forces would be insufficient and that I would recommend their reinforcement by Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes. I therefore proposed placing Port Commanders 23 and 25 at the disposal of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus until Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes can be completely transferred there.

Should Army Group A disagree with this proposal then Port Commanders 23 and 25 will have to be transferred to Mariupol. Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes' supply depot at Voroshilovsk is to be moved to Mariupol.

1230 Group South transmitted an order from the Führer on the development and safeguarding of communications over Kerch Strait. It states that the Navy must arrange for a rise in shipping operations in Kerch Strait and take all possible precautions to prevent the traffic from being held up and enemy naval forces from penetrating.

With reference to this I suggest that it might be possible to lay even more minefields in Kerch Strait and that U-boats might, conceivably, be disposed in position lines off the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-9-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

There is at present more shipping in Kerch Strait than necessary for present supplies, and more is on the way.

1740 It was reported that the enemy had not been sighted during today's air reconnaissance.

2100 Naval Staff, Operations Division, in a fairly long teletype on the tasks arising out of the conveyance of supplies for Army Group A across the Crimea, considered that cooperation with the Air Force should be resumed, organizing the convoys in such a way that our weak air strength be put to the best possible use. This might necessitate the restriction of the large-scale reconnaissance over the entire eastern Black Sea in favor of stronger defenses for the northwestern Black Sea and the inshore waters of the Crimea.

In connection with this I replied to Group South that I had quite recently, on 28 December, thoroughly discussed the problems of reconnaissance over the sea with General Zander (Air Force). The uses to which the German, Rumanian and Bulgarian Air Forces could be put were explored. Every possible means of releasing forces in the present area has been exhausted. I would like to point out that in my opinion and in that of Air Force Staff, Crimea, Naval Staff's proposal to abandon large-scale reconnaissance over the eastern Black Sea would make it impossible for our convoys to be warned of enemy movements in time. And without adequate warning convoys cannot be run. Limited reconnaissance can, of course, identify naval forces advancing into the area surveyed with greater certainty. But convoys are then, however, unable to evade attack early enough because of their slow speed, weak naval forces and above all, lack of air cover. Convoys can only be stopped in time if enemy activity is detected as far away as east of 37° E. These remarks are based on the experience gained from former air reconnaissance operations and have generally proved correct.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

6 January, 1943

Simferopol

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that Army H.Q. 17 did not consider it necessary for units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes to reinforce the Taman Peninsula. On the other hand it was hoped that Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus would soon assume command of the Peninsula on behalf of the Navy. To this I replied that the expression 'on behalf of the Navy' was misleading. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus could only accept the task as sector commander subordinate to the Army H.Q. concerned. In accordance with Fuhrer Directive 40 responsibility is to remain with the Army. In connection with this I consider it particularly unfortunate that the Army should wish this task to be carried out by Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus at the present difficult juncture because his Command played no decisive part in previous general defense measures on the Taman Peninsula and could thus scarcely assume responsibility for operations which may take place very shortly. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the Staff of Naval Shore Commander is neither manned nor prepared for the command of a large-scale, combined naval and land defense operation. For such a task it would need to be reinforced by one or two General Staff officers.

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A further proposed that all naval units not needed by Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes should be withdrawn as quickly as possible to Mariupol or Berdyansk, and those sections not absolutely indispensable to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to the Crimea.

I agree to the proposal to withdraw the entire staff of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes, also the 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion, and hereby notify that I plan to transfer the units to the Crimea as soon as they are released by Army Group A. I approve of the transfer to the Crimea because the Naval Shore Commander will have better facilities for training there and he and his Port Commanders will form a considerable emergency reserve for the otherwise weak forces of the Crimea.

1000 Regarding the appearance of Russian naval forces in the Black Sea, I submitted the following situation report:

"1. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that Russian naval forces maintained radio silence on 1 and 2 January.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

2. 3 January:

- a. 0900 radio intercept report:  
Destroyer in southeastern Black Sea.  
1640 the same destroyer off the central east coast.
- b. 1745 the flash of searchlights was observed several times south of Alushta.
- c. 1937 Main Naval D/F Station, Theodosia obtained a bearing of 184° on a Russian minelayer.

3. 4 January:

- a. 1236-1326 an object, 80 to 90 km. east of Varna, was intercepted by radar, easterly course.
  - b. 1400 the same making away 150 km. east-southeast of Galata.
  - c. 1720-1724 several red, white and green balls of light southsoutheast of Galata reported by German sentries. They were definitely not German or Bulgarian forces.
4. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted the large destroyer "Charkov" and a destroyer off Poti and Batum.
5. Observations reported under 1) and 2) gave rise to orders to Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea, Ukraine and Caucasus for increased operational readiness until the forenoon of 4 January. The departure of convoys was made to depend on the next morning's air reconnaissance. In fact their departure was prevented by adverse weather. Air reconnaissance during this period observed no enemy activity.
- The rest of the general observations led to the conclusion that Russian naval forces were attempting a renewed sortie into the western Black Sea."

1010

As a result of a statement issued by the Chief of General Staff, Naval Staff, Operations Division stressed the heavy responsibilities the developments on the southeastern front were thrusting on the Navy and therefore ordered that all defense measures so far planned by the Navy to counter Russian landing attempts, should be checked. With regard to this I have informed Group South that defense measures against possible Russian landings have been intensively carried out for weeks and are being constantly

CONFIDENTIAL

improved upon. During the bad weather period offensive measures are, of course, very much restricted because both our own and Italian E-boats cannot operate when the sea is at force 4. Several operations started in December had to be broken off because of the weather.

Preliminary measures for constructing jumping-off bases at Sevastopol and Theodosia have been taken.

Various methods for the execution of the proposed extension of the minefields have been suggested.

Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea, Ukraine and Caucasus have been instructed to re-check and complete all defense measures, particularly the fire plans of the remote batteries, for instance on the Taman Peninsula.

1357 Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A transmitted the following information on 4 January:

"Commanding General, Army Group A decreed in IA-OQu 2 No. 61/43 Geh.:

As a result of the present special situation in the Caucasus, as Commanding General of Army Group A I have been given complete authority over all military, police and civil offices operating within the control of Army Group A. They are thus directly subordinate to me."

Thereupon I enquired from Group South whether this was to be interpreted to mean that Admiral, Black Sea was also subordinate to Army Group A. Should this be so I requested an explanation as to how far Army Group A could justifiably issue directives for the conduct of naval warfare.

Group South replied that the complete subordination of Admiral, Black Sea to Army Group A was impossible. For the conduct of naval warfare Admiral, Black Sea was answerable exclusively to Group South who alone were entitled to issue directives.

1730 Air reconnaissance was badly handicapped by the weather. No sighting reports came in. The Caucasus coast and harbors were examined. Convoy traffic was normal.

2120 At 1842 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer off Tuapse.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

7 January, 1943

Simferopol

- 0331 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that at 0138 CET a destroyer was making for the southeast.
- 1100 At 1600 the 1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered, weather permitting, to put to sea and occupy a reconnaissance line in grid squares CI 6284 and 6643. On encountering the enemy a "Most Immediate" report to be sent. Valuable targets to be attacked.
- 1548 Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that a plane dropped 6 bombs and fired on 2 boats of the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol. No damage.
- 1830 Naval Port Commander, Kerch reported that route Brown in Kerch Strait, which has been closed for some days because of the danger of aerial mines, was swept by the FZ-group and a minesweeping plane and re-opened to shipping. The check-sweep was delayed several days by the weather.
- 1832 The 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba again because the operation had to be broken off owing to a rough sea and heavy swell.
- 1903 Air reconnaissance by Air Force Staff, Crimea had nothing to report. The harbors Poti and Batum were examined by visual reconnaissance: heavy, well-placed anti-aircraft of all calibers were identified.
- At Poti were:  
Battleship "Parishskaya Kommuna",  
1 heavy cruiser,  
2 destroyers,  
the hull of a heavy cruiser in dock,  
the hull of another heavy cruiser afloat in the inner harbor.
- At Ghelonjik, Tuapse and Sochi a number of freighters, coastal vessels and smaller naval vessels were observed.
- 2056 At 1955 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer presumably off the east coast. No further shipping movements were identified that day.
- 2105 Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A informed me that the situation demanded that preparations for blowing up or otherwise destroying all naval material, including shipping, be carried out at Rostov immediately. I have directed Port Commander, Rostov accordingly and requested Port Commander, Mariupol to give him all possible support.

CONFIDENTIAL

8 January, 1943

Simferopol

I conferred with Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla, Lieut. (s.g.) Christiansen, on the operational opportunities open to his flotilla now that operations have had to be repeatedly broken off because of the weather. Lieut. (s.g.) Christiansen told me that present conditions in the Black Sea are particularly unfavorable owing to constant and frequently very strong winds plus rough seas and a heavy swell which hamper operations even when the winds in the operational area are still reasonably favorable.

I then discussed the question of laying minefields off Theodosia Bay. The Flotilla Commander reported that in an approach or return passage of 200 miles an error in fix up to 20 miles was to be expected owing to errors in steering and changing currents. This means that the return passage to Ivan Baba may be steered most inaccurately, making our own minefields off the bay very dangerous to the boats, more especially since the minefields have to be laid as shallow minefields if they are to be of any use. E-boats cannot therefore pass over them. Even when the heavy seas exclude the use of armaments, the boats can still be put to limited use for reconnaissance off the coast.

I have reported accordingly to Group South.

- 1200 I have given Commander, Danube Flotilla the necessary instructions about the new minelaying measures in Kerch Strait.
- 1518 Naval Port Commander, Rostov reported that all measures for setting fire to the shipping and wharves have been taken. Should destruction prove necessary, he enquired whether he should act on orders from the army commands in Rostov or await special orders from the Navy. I replied that orders from the Army would suffice adding, moreover, that as much as possible from the supply depot at Rostov must be salvaged. I have already instructed Port Commander, Mariupol to dispatch every available truck to Rostov and will now order 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion in Melitopol to employ every available truck for the removal of these supplies.
- 1703 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that at 1130 a destroyer was probably in the south-eastern Black Sea and that at 1530, the battleship "Parishskaya Kommuna" was, according to radio

CONFIDENTIAL

-15-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

traffic, probably off Batum. The battleship was in communication with the destroyer reported at 1130.

2050 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that no sighting reports had been received from the southeastern Black Sea. Harbor reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast could not take place owing to the weather. No reconnaissance over the central Black Sea because of engine trouble.

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that it was not intended to hand over the defense of the Taman Peninsula entirely to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus (see War Diary 6 January). Indeed, Army Group A's request was that the boundary between Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Naval Shore Commander, Crimea/Ukraine should be transferred westward so that the whole Taman Peninsula would be in the area of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus. I only approve of this proposal because I consider that the defense of Kerch Strait and the Kerch-Taman supply traffic must remain under one command. The Naval Shore Commanders have been instructed accordingly.

With reference to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A proposed that those Port Commands not operating in Anapa and Novorossisk be withdrawn to the Crimea as soon as they are released by Army H.Q. 17. In addition he stated that Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes will hardly have been released by Army H.Q. I (Tanks) before the end of January.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

9 January, 1943

Simferopol

- 0620 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that no further observations had been submitted about the battleship.
- 1100 Two boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to put out at 1600 and to occupy a reconnaissance line in grid squares CL 6573 and 6531. "Most Immediate" report to be dispatched if enemy sighted.
- 1115 As a result of the present situation I have conferred with Commander, Italian E-Boats, Captain Mimbelli, and discussed the problem of how to establish the operational readiness of boats which are out of action. It was decided to transfer 3 boats to Theodosia as quickly as possible and to station the rest at Yalta.
- 1735 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that operations were out of the question because of the weather.
- 1800 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that at 1645 radio traffic identified the large destroyer "Charkov" and 2 destroyers in the southeastern Black Sea and at 1715, 3 torpedo-boats off the central east coast. I therefore requested Air Force Staff, Crimea by telephone to send out morning reconnaissance as early as possible.
- 1900 Air reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea obtained no sighting reports. The Caucasus coast and harbors have been examined. The battleship "Parishskaya Kommuna" was identified in Poti. No sighting reports in the central Black Sea. Visual reconnaissance identified 4 warships at anchor in Batum roads. Apart from the battleship there were the usual warships in the inner harbor at Poti. During the last two days supply traffic across Kerch Strait has increased now that at last adequate supplies for the Armed Forces have been delivered. On 8 January 863 tons, on 9 January 968 tons, of goods for the Armed Forces were transported to the Taman Peninsula.

CONFIDENTIAL

-17-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

10 January, 1943

Simferopol

- 0152 Main Naval D/F Station reported that, according to radio traffic, another destroyer was at sea, presumably central east coast.
- 0215 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that on the afternoon of 8 January "Ship 19" put out from Sulina. Until about 0900 in the evening she stood off the mouth of the Danube, then proceeded in convoy with the "Budapest" from Sulina to Sevastopol where she is to remain off the west coast of the Crimea near Tarkhankuzky or Sarich until her return with the next convoy from Sevastopol.
- 0723 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza stated that the large destroyer "Charkov" and the 2 destroyers reported at sea yesterday had presumably put in to their base.
- 1200 I have had a long discussion with Lieut. (s.g.) Rosenbaum, Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla, about U-boat operations up to the present. I reported the results to Group South as follows:
1. U-boats have been disposed off Poti and Batum with the object of tying down the Russian Fleet to its harbors as much as possible. The recent growth of air defenses in that area very frequently forced our boats to submerge even at night making prospects of attack a matter of chance. Constant submerging so reduced the range of vision that even reconnaissance reports of enemy sailings were not guaranteed. Air reconnaissance reports could only be supplied to the boats on very long wave, causing considerable delay.
  2. The object is to harass the enemy by making him believe that one of our U-boats is stationed off his ports. Whenever possible the boat transmits radiograms in the Poti/Batum area which are inevitably intercepted by the enemy. She then returns to her actual operational area.
  3. During U-boat operations at night 3-4 miles from the coast it has recently been observed that the Russians obviously take a bearing on the noise of the Diesel engines and with crossed searchlights make the bearing for the planes in the point of intersection. These then search with flares starting from the

CONFIDENTIAL

-18-

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

point of intersection. By promptly switching over to electric motors, the U-boat has so far been able to escape pursuit.

4. Having carefully investigated all the relevant factors in the present general situation I would submit the following suggestions for operations:
  - a. One boat to be disposed for attack between CL 6930 and 9310.
  - b. One boat between CL 6670 and 6680.

These positions guarantee a good breadth of reconnaissance ahead of the probable enemy route, make possible operations against enemy supplies and are well placed for rapid disposition against possible landing forces not intercepted on the approach route in the Theodosia-Novorossisk area. Accordingly on her next passage U 24 will operate in CL 6930 and 9310.

5. In order to increase the U-boats' operational period, the intention is that the boats should refuel at Theodosia on the outward and homeward passage. If necessary, a fresh stock of torpedoes may be obtained from "Romania" at Sevastopol. This intermediate refueling will mean another 4 days in the operational area. This would coincide with the maximum physical endurance of the crew (only a fortnight). Inclusive of the stay in the operational area, the whole period would be 25 days.
6. Impossible to call at Ivan Baba since water at the bridgehead is only 2.60 meters deep. Reconnaissance has already been carried out.
7. Of U-boat operations in general it should be noted that the boats which have been transferred from Germany have not been thoroughly overhauled. In view of the present situation maximum working hours have to some extent been exceeded. From March onwards the need for thorough overhauls will have to be taken into account.

1335 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that at 0915 in Sukhum harbor 1 cruiser and 2 destroyers were identified.

1545 Two planes raided the base at Ivan Baba. They were driven off by anti-aircraft fire.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1756 According to radio traffic, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer, 1 torpedoboat and a further small vessel at 1540 off Tuapse.
- 2100 It is reported from Kerch that a total of 1,380 tons of service supplies was unloaded today.
- 2253 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that there were no sighting reports from the southeastern Black Sea. The Caucasus coast and the harbors were examined. Supply traffic in a north-south direction has increased. Reports of Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza were confirmed by reconnaissance.
- 1355 Destroyers were sighted in grid square 1314, on a southeasterly course. There have been no significant changes in the shipping in the bases. There was scarcely any shipping in Batum. Reconnaissance of the central Black Sea produced no sighting reports.

CONFIDENTIAL

-20-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

11 January, 1943

Simferopol

0849 . According to radio traffic, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a torpedoboat in the southeastern Black Sea.

1057 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported another destroyer at 0849 in the southeastern Black Sea.

1100 Captain Mimbelli informed us that he had received a radiogram from the Italian Admiralty which ordered the withdrawal of all Italian personnel from the Black Sea for operations in the Mediterranean. The Italian Admiralty and Naval Staff in Berlin had agreed that Germany should take charge of Italian E-boats and U-boats. The crews of the 4 Italian E-boats fit for service would remain here until the boats were taken over by German personnel.

I have passed this information on to Group South immediately and expressed my very grave misgivings concerning this measure at the present moment.

1400 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that as a result of a long talk with Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A and of a teletype order simultaneously received from Commanding General, Army Group A, he would transfer to Temriuk by 14 January at the latest. It was impossible to transfer anywhere else, not even to Anapa, because there would be neither accommodation nor provision for communications. The transfer would also seem to be expedient in view of operational artillery headquarters at Taman.

I do not share Naval Shore Commander's views and would therefore put forward the following points:

1. The present situation demands of the Naval Shore Commander direct knowledge of the naval situation. This is impossible from Temriuk. The Naval Shore Commander should be as close as possible to the focal point of his area which is at present Anapa.
2. Even the most efficient facilities for communication from Temriuk could not enable the Naval Shore Commander to control artillery on the Taman Peninsula. Local control will have to be through the sector commanders in accordance with general directives issued by the Naval Shore Commander.

CONFIDENTIAL

-21-

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

Since the Naval Shore Commander is at present operationally subordinate to Army Group A I must confine myself to bringing this fundamental interpretation to the notice of Army Group A through the Naval Liaison Officer.

- 2150 Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that on the evening of 10 January he reached the target area Cherkesk according to plan. Despite bad weather no material damage was suffered.
- 2155 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that rain squalls partially prevented reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea. There were no sighting reports. The Caucasus coast and harbors were examined. Increased convoy traffic was identified between Sukhum and Sochi. Shipping in Poti was normal. Reconnaissance over the central Black Sea was broken off because of the weather. No sighting reports.
- 2232 Group South and Naval Staff, Operations Division reported that at 0622 on 10 January 2 Russian destroyers on a northerly course were sighted from Trabzon. This presumably referred to the vessels reported by Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL

-22-

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

12 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0630 0600 radio intercept service reported 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea.  
0630 one destroyer proceeding to the north.  
0940 off Tuapse probably another destroyer.
- 1140 In addition to the 2 destroyers reported off the central east coast at 1000 by radio intercept service, radio traffic reported cruiser "A", 3 torpedoboats and another small vessel, probably proceeding in formation. All were receiving radiograms from Poti transmitted via Tuapse.
- 1600 A formation of 3 destroyers, on board one of which was Commanding Admiral, Light Forces, was identified at 1540 in the southeastern Black Sea. A bearing was obtained on Commanding Admiral, Light Forces along a line Mamaia-Coruh (east of Trabzon).
- 1835 Re radio intercept report of 1600: the formation probably included the large destroyer "Charkov" on which a bearing of 110° was obtained at 1808. In accordance with this, formation possibly on a westerly course.

Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that adverse weather prevented reconnaissance over the Black Sea on 12 January. The Caucasus coast and harbors were partially examined. Nothing to report. The bases at Batum and Poti were not examined.

Comments:

According to radio intelligence there was a moderately large formation of enemy light forces at sea. By contrast with enemy procedure during previous operations when he preserved complete radio silence until he was discovered, his lively radio activity on this occasion was striking. No conclusions regarding enemy plans can be drawn from the radio intercept reports. I assume, however, that the formation now at sea has no offensive designs since lively radio activity excluded the surprise element so important in landing operations or sorties against our convoy traffic in the western Black Sea.

I have informed the subordinate commands or Army Offices concerned about the radio intelligence and the above survey of the situation.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Own Situation:

0100 Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that the acute threat to the supply route via Rostov has to some extent been mitigated.

Adverse weather prevented operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla planned as a result of the above radio intercept reports.

The Kerch-Taman-Temriuk supply traffic had to be canceled today because of a bottleneck at the ports of disembarkation.

Difficulties caused by ice have greatly increased, particularly on the rivers of the west coast. Shipping to Nikolaiev had to be stopped. Galatz and Braila are blocked by ice.

For the routine check-sweep of the supply routes Kerch-Temriuk, Genichesk-Temriuk, Berdyansk-Akhtari, Mariupol-Yeisk and Taganrog-Azov, which will take place after the difficulties caused by ice in the Sea of Azov have been overcome, I request the allocation of 2 minesweeper flotillas of large Baltic fishing vessels, since more minelaying operations will be necessary and the available minesweeping vessels are quite inadequate for any regular check-sweep of the routes.

CONFIDENTIAL

-24-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

13 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0735 Ghelenjik harbor: 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons, 4 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s and 40 other boats were identified by Air Force Staff, Crimea.
- 0740 According to radio intercept reports, 1 of the destroyers reported off the central east coast yesterday was still at sea.
- 0830 Two of the torpedoboats reported yesterday off the central east coast presumably proceeding to the south.
- 0845 Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:  
Tuapse harbor: 1 freighter of 6,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, presumably 1 minelayer and 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons.
- 0850 One tanker of 6,000 tons, 1 minelayer and 3 patrol vessels, course 120°.
- 1310 Batum harbor: 1 heavy cruiser with steam up, 1 light cruiser, 3 tankers of 2,000 tons on the roads.
- 1323 Poti harbor: 1 battleship, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 1 torpedoboat.
- 1350 According to a radio intercept report, 2 of the destroyers reported at 1230 yesterday belonging to the formation were still identified at sea; position unknown, only picked up while receiving radio messages.
- 1410 Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:  
Grid square 0457 (30 miles west of Gagri)  
1 tanker of 2,000 tons, 2 M.T.B.s, course 310°.
- 1417 Grid square 9461 (15 miles west of Adler)  
1 destroyer, course 310°.
- 1430 Grid square 9417 (20 miles south of Tuapse)  
1 tanker of 4,000 tons, 3 patrol vessels, course southeast.
- 1435 Grid square 0477 (30 miles west of Sukhum)  
1 tanker of 800 tons, course northwest.
- 1442 Grid square 8558 (20 miles south of Ghelenjik)  
3 M.T.B.s, course southeast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-25-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1452 Ghelenjik harbor: 3 tankers, 4 freighters, coastal vessels and boats.
- 1500 One of the destroyers reported by radio intercept at 1250 was according to radio traffic off Tuapse at 1445.

Comments:

Visual reconnaissance of the Russian bases only identified the battleship, 1 heavy cruiser and 1 light cruiser in harbor. Accordingly the main body of the Russian Fleet, with 2 heavy cruisers and 1 light cruiser belonging to it, is at sea. Of the larger warships air reconnaissance sighted only 1 destroyer in grid square 9461, course 310°. Radio intelligence had intercepted part of the formation on 12 January. Thus enemy forces have already been more than 24 hours at sea so that a fairly large-scale operation against the Crimea or the Anapa coast or a sortie into the western Black Sea must be expected.

Naval Commanders and Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea have been advised accordingly.

Own Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A informed us that it has been planned to occupy a bridgehead position centering on the Taman Peninsula. I conclude therefore that the Army intends to evacuate Novorossisk and the coast as far as Anapa. Since Novorossisk is a keypoint if the Taman Peninsula is to be held, and since Kerch Strait cannot be controlled without possession of the Taman Peninsula, I thought it necessary to send the following radiogram to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A and Naval Liaison Officer, Group Wetzel:

"Re Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A 85/43 Gkdos. Chofs. dated 15 January para. 5, I wish to indicate the decisive significance of the Taman Peninsula, possession of which alone guarantees control of Kerch Strait and consequently safeguards naval communication with the Sea of Azov. In this connection the occupation of Anapa and Novorossisk becomes of great significance from the naval point of view since even the persistent destruction of harbors is only effective for a limited time.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chofs. 33/43 A I."

- 0913 30th U-Boat Flotilla reported that U 24 would not be ready to put out until 16 January owing to a defective periscope.



CONFIDENTIAL

Persistent bad weather prevented operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and caused minesweeping of Kerch Strait to stop.

Group South has approved the immediate transfer of the Italian Assault Boat Flotilla back to Italy.

On 11 January Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus submitted a situation report proposing that all units of the Naval Shore Commander, except Port Commanders, Anapa and Novorossisk and a small commanding staff in Temriuk, should be transferred to the Crimea.

I asked Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A for his attitude to this. He advocated the immediate transfer of all sections of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus not required by the Army back to the Crimea. It is further proposed to bring back all units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes to Mariupol-Berdyansk as soon as they are released by the Army.

I have submitted the following survey of this situation to Group South, at the same time informing them of the conclusions drawn:

1. Naval Liaison Officer's survey of the situation dated 13 January leads to the conclusion that the Crimean harbors have gained in importance as a result of the Army's measures in the Caucasus.
2. Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes was today released by the Panzer Army. He is therefore available again for naval tasks.
3. The Army is shortly expected to release 3 Port Commanders of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus.
4. The west coast of the Crimea is at present so weakly occupied that a reinforcement of defense measures is a priority there. The following measures have therefore been adopted:

a. Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes:

1. Port Commander 26 will remain in Mariupol to safeguard Naval Shore Commander's supply depot there.
2. One Port Commander will reinforce the harbor defenses in Sevastopol, Eupatoria, Ak Mechet and Skadovsk. In addition four 15.2 cm. guns (formerly at Berdyansk West) will be transferred

CONFIDENTIAL

to Eupatoria and three 15.2 cm. guns to Ak Mechet (formerly Mariupol-Port).

3. The rest of Naval Shore Command, Xerxes will be stationed at Eupatoria as an emergency unit.

b. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus:

1. One Port Commander will reinforce the harbor defenses at Kerch.
2. Two other Port Commanders will be transferred to the Crimea. Local headquarters will be decided in agreement with Commanding Admiral, Crimea.

c. Defense of Kerch Strait:

The five 10.5 semi-automatic guns so far intended for the defense of Anapa and still stored in Kerch, will no longer go to Anapa but will, instead, be erected near Cape Takil to provide gun defense for Kerch Strait.

d. Reinforced Frontier Control Service (Coastal):

The two commissariats with Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes will be used to reinforce coastal control off the western Crimean coast and the coast to the northwest of the Crimea.

Orders will be issued accordingly to Naval Shore Commanders, Caucasus, Xerxes and Crimea/Ukraine.

1900 Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes reported that, in accordance with orders from Army H.Q. 3 (Panzer), on the morning of 13 January he transferred the entire command to Sovetskaya, 20 miles south of Armavir.

Not all the columns have arrived yet because of the bad state of the roads. He requested further orders.

He was directed to march his units, as they were released, towards Mariupol.

Future operational headquarters were allocated as follows:

Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and  
Port Commanders 23 and 25 - Eupatoria  
Port Commander 17 - Sevastopol  
Port Commander 22 - Ak Mechet  
Port Commander 24 - Skadovsk  
Port Commander 26 - Mariupol.

CONFIDENTIAL

-28-

SECRET INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

14 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0720 Air Force Staff, Crimea identified a destroyer in grid square 0542 (30 miles west of Ochomchiri) on a southeasterly course at high speed.
- 0900 Sochi harbor: 2 coastal vessels of 1,100 tons and presumably 3 motor minesweepers.
- 0925 Ghelenjik harbor: 2 transports of 800 tons each, 3 coastal vessels of 1,500 tons each, 2 motor minesweepers and 4 M.T.B.s.

Operations in the southeastern Black Sea soon had to be broken off because of ice. Caucasus coast and harbors partially examined. No sighting reports.

One reconnaissance made of central Black Sea. One plane between 31° 30' E, 35° 30' E and 42° 30' N, 44° 50' N. No sighting reports.

- 2005 According to radio intercept reports, at 1830 1 torpedoboat and 2 submarines were off the central east coast.

Comments:

Air reconnaissance and radio intelligence give no clues to actual enemy plans. The only moderately large vessel (a destroyer) sighted by the Air Force 50 miles west of Ochomchiri was steering a southeasterly course, i.e. course Poti-Batum.

Own Situation:

The persistent gale, NE winds, force 6-8, today again prevented the FZ-group from preparing for minelaying operations in the southern approach to Kerch Strait.

Adverse weather continued to hold up convoy traffic.

Ice began to form in Kerch and Taman harbors, for the first time hindering supply traffic.

- 1632 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that, despite his protests, the east mole and the U-boat berth at Novorossisk were blown up by the Army.

CONFIDENTIAL

-29-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

2105 Two Russian bombers raided Ivan Baba.  
Defensive gunfire from the anti-aircraft  
batteries repulsed them.

The northern approach to Sevastopol as far as  
Cape Lukul was swept for moored mines. Two  
drifting Russian mines were shot up.

Port Commander, Rostov stated that there was  
nothing to report on the situation near  
Rostov.

CONFIDENTIAL

-30-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

15 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 1010 Air Force Staff, Crimea identified 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 patrol vessel on a southerly course at medium speed in grid square 1335 (12 miles south of Ochemchiri).
- 1047 Two freighters, 2 coastal vessels identified in grid square 1311 (Sukhum roads).
- 1100 One freighter of 1,000 tons, 2 patrol vessels on a southeasterly course, medium speed, identified in grid square 0457 (15 miles west of Gagri).
- 1220 Batum: 3 tankers of 4,000 tons each in the roads, 1 destroyer putting in.
- 1310 Air Force Staff, Crimea identified 1 tanker of approximately 1,000 G.R.T., 1 coastal vessel, 1 patrol vessel on a southeasterly course, in grid square 0479 (22 miles west of Sukhum).
- 1350 Sochi harbor: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons.
- 1343 One tanker of 1,000 G.R.T., 1 tug, course 310°, identified in grid square 9436 (8 miles west of Sochi).  
Ghelenjik harbor: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 3 coastal vessels of 500 tons each, 4 motor minesweepers, 7 M.T.B.s and 55 other boats.  
Tuapse harbor: 1 freighter of 6,000 tons, 3 freighters each of 1,500 tons, 2 freighters each of 1,000 tons, 9 coastal vessels of 3,500 tons, 1 floating crane, 4 motor minesweepers and 11 M.T.B.s.
- 2155 Three torpedoboats, 10 minelayers, 1 M.T.B., 1 patrol vessel. The formation had been previously intercepted from radio traffic in the southeastern Black Sea at 2030.

Comments:

Neither the Air Force nor radio intercept service intercepted the forces of the Russian Fleet. Enemy supply traffic off the Caucasus coast did not exceed the normal. From the quantity of shipping in the harbors of Tuapse and Ghelenjik, one must conclude that shipments for the Russian Caucasus front are heavy.

CONFIDENTIAL

-31-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Own Situation:

Again today the persistent NE - E winds, force 7-8, prevented the resumption of convoy traffic and minesweeping, also operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla.

The sudden heavy drop in the temperature and the previous drop in the temperature of the water have caused a layer of fast ice to form within 2 days in the harbors of Kerch, Taman and Temriuk which cannot be kept open with the resources available. During the past few days the weather has been holding up the proposed transfer of the icebreaker "Solombala" and of the tug "Kiel", suitable for icebreaking, from Sevastopol and Theodosia to Kerch. Should the weather improve the tugs have orders to transfer rapidly to Kerch. Owing to their deep draught ("Solombala" 5 meters, "Kiel" 3.5 meters) they cannot be used in the approach and harbor of Taman. The entire supply traffic in Kerch is tied down. These naval ferry barges fit for operations have been placed in clear water off Kerch and ordered temporarily to transfer to Theodosia on 16 January in order to avoid being frozen in at Kerch and exposed to air attack, a particular menace there. All commands concerned with Army supplies will be informed of the new situation.

1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that the 2 reserve boats, S 40 and S 52, proceeding down the Danube to Sulina, have stuck in the ice 5 kilometers above Braila. Sea Transportation Section, Braila has been ordered to make every effort to tow the boats, which are sensitive to ice, to Braila.

Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla received the following directive regarding U 24 which, according to the latest reports, was to be provisionally ready for operations on 16 January:

"Further to conference with the Flotilla Commander:

1. Operational area of U 24 will be between Adler and Shache (Golovinski) to within 40 miles of the coast. Beware of deep water and enemy mines.
2. Proceed from Constantza directly to the operational area.
3. Refuel at Theodosia on the return passage.

CONFIDENTIAL

-32-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

4. Task: Attack supply traffic and enemy forces from torpedoboats upwards. Observe and, if necessary, report enemy activity with particular reference to plans for landing in accordance with the Flotilla Commander's verbal instructions and directive.
5. If plans for a landing are discovered U 24 will occupy a reconnaissance line in 44° 40' N between 37° 0' and 37° 20' E. Orders for this will be issued by Admiral, Black Sea via 30th U-Boat Flotilla, cover name "Panthersprung".
6. Task in the reconnaissance line to damage the enemy landing fleet. Therefore, above all, attack the transports and then the escorts.
7. Details to be discussed with the Flotilla Commander.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chofs. 37 A I."

30th U-Boat Flotilla to report U 19 provisionally ready for operations on 21 January.

According to Intelligence Center, Rumania and Air Force Staff, Crimea, the Soviet will launch the major attack on Novorossisk during the next few days. Simultaneously there will be a large-scale landing operation in the Anapa area.

(Signed) Witthoeft-Emden.

CONFIDENTIAL

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea  
1-15 January, 1945

Re page 10, 5 January:

Admiral, Black Sea's attitude to the disposition of the Air Force for the defense of convoys is approved.

Re page 15, 6 January, second paragraph:

The preparations for the construction of jumping-off bases in Sevastopol and Theodosia are specifically for our U-boats.

Re page 24, 12 January:

The Group supports the allocation of two minesweeper flotillas of large Baltic fishing vessels. As a result of developments in the land situation and the great need for sea transportation these vessels are urgently needed.

On behalf of Naval Group Command South:

Chief of Staff.

(Signed) Erinkmann.

CONFIDENTIAL

-34-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 JANUARY, 1943

PG/31524

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

16 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

1130 Two torpedoboats and 1 patrol vessel of the formation reported yesterday by radio intercept service were still identified at sea. According to radio traffic presumably central to southern east coast.

1750 1740 1 destroyer in the Tuapse area.

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following report for the day. Adverse weather prevented morning operations. Reconnaissance was made of the eastern Black Sea and the coast. No reports of the enemy. Slight activity off the east coast.

Comments:

Apparently the enemy fleet was not at sea. Weather conditions unfavorable for landings or longer operations, hence the present slight activity.

Own Situation:

Ice in Kerch Strait increased again during the past night. The naval ferry barges which had been moved into ice-free waters are frozen in. A continuous layer of fast ice has formed from Kerch to Pavlovski. The plan to transfer the naval ferry barges is therefore out of the question at present.

U 24 will be ready for operations by 17 January except for the new sounding set whose wiring diagram has not arrived in time because snowdrifts have brought the railways to a standstill. In view of the urgency of operations, 30th U-Boat Flotilla has been ordered to send out U 24 without the sounding set on the night of 18 January in accordance with the directive Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chdfs. 37 A I dated 15 January (see War Diary, 15 January). No improvement in the weather so that convoys and 1st E-Boat Flotilla were still unable to operate.

The activity of the Russian Air Force became lively. Raids were primarily directed against the harbors of Kerch and Taman whose importance for German supplies to the Caucasus front was rightly recognized by the enemy. There were 6 raids on Taman (0315, 0840, 1030, 1115, 1145, 1152) and a total of 19 bombs was dropped but

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

no damage of military importance. At 0317 and 1030 7 bombs were dropped on Kerch. The water works sustained a direct hit, splinter damage to several naval ferry barges and other vessels, including naval ferry barge No. 532 which had two casualties, one killed and one seriously wounded, but the boat was ready for operations. Naval ferry barge No. 469 was also hit, three men slightly wounded.

Two raids on Ivan Baba (2055 and 2136). Enemy planes were driven off by anti-aircraft fire and prevented from dropping their bombs.

2350 Twenty-four bombs dropped on Rostov. No naval damage.

Naval Staff, Operations Division reported that the Italian Admiralty approved the suggestion that the Italian crews of Italian E-boats ready for operations should remain until they could be relieved by German crews. The decision whether to recall the crews now in Italy of the Italian E-boats under repair is still pending.

CONFIDENTIAL

17 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 1016 In grid square 0325 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported (12 miles southwest of Sukhum)  
1 freighter, 1 destroyer, 1 minesweeper, 1 motor minesweeper, course northwest, moderate speed.
- 1035 Sukhum harbor: 2 freighters.
- 1110 Ghelenjik harbor: 3 coastal vessels and 25 boats.  
Poti harbor: 5 escort vessels, 2 torpedoboats, 2 minesweepers, 4 motor minesweepers, 12 M.T.B.s, 11 submarines, 1 tanker, 4 freighters of 4,000 tons each, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, 5 freighters of 1,500 tons each, 10 coastal vessels totaling 4,000 tons.  
Sochi harbor: 4 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons, 5 motor minesweepers.  
Tuapse harbor: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 1 floating crane, 5 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 tons, 3 minelayers, 9 motor minesweepers, 10 E-boats and 1 landing craft.
- 1120 Radio intercept service obtained a bearing on a submarine at 1107 along the line Mamaia-Zonguldak, and on a submarine in grid square 0229 (45 miles northwest of Zonguldak). Up to 1120 a submarine was located about 45 miles westnorthwest of Zonguldak.
- 1140 A submarine in grid square 9486-24 E (85 miles east of Varna).
- 2400 The submarine intercepted at 1107 along the line Mamaia-Zonguldak was located at 1140 about 85 miles east of Varna.

Comments:

Radio intercept reports and air reconnaissance give little indication of enemy plans. Furthermore, weather conditions do not at all favor landing operations.

Own Situation:

Again today persistent NE winds, force 6-8, have prevented the resumption of convoy traffic or the occupation of a reconnaissance line by 1st E-Boat Flotilla.

CONFIDENTIAL

-37-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ice conditions in Kerch Strait were unchanged. Experience has shown that the ice will cause difficulties until mid-February. A way of transporting the most important supplies will have to be found. I therefore invited Commander, Army Supply Section 587 and Commanding Admiral, Crimea's technical experts to confer with me on this problem. I reported the result in the following teletype to Group South:

"Re your Op. Ghdos. Chfs. 81/43:

Re para. 1.:

- a. In consultation with the relevant Army Offices, transportation of supplies from Theodosia to the southwest corner of the Taman Peninsula has been settled.
- b. Our proposal for the creation of a jumping-off point east of Theodosia near Cape Kys Aul was rejected by the Army because of bad road conditions.
- c. The Army will, if possible, build a landing stage at a suitable point between Cape Papagiya and Shelycsniy Rog.
- d. Anapa has been rejected as a port of discharge since the bridges are destroyed, the route wastes too much time and strong enemy countermeasures are to be expected.
- e. Admiral, Black Sea will employ all naval ferry barges ready for operations not frozen in at Kerch. Furthermore, with the help of icebreakers, he will attempt to transfer Kerch naval ferry barges to Theodosia. Icebreakers will be transferred to Theodosia; their transfer to Kerch is impossible due to the persistent northeasterly gales during the past days. "Solombala" is at present at Balaklava and "Kiel" at Theodosia.
- f. The possibility of mooring the naval ferry barges on fast ice will be investigated as soon as it is strong enough. There seems little hope of this, however, since an impassable belt of mud and drift ice lies in front of the fast ice.

Re para. 2.:

The Army will lay the ice road between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka. The necessary manpower is available. A check-sweep of the ice road for non-contact mines by a minesweeping Ju should be made.

CONFIDENTIAL

-38-

SECURITY INFORMATION

Re para. 3.:

For transportation of supplies from Theodosia in accordance with para. 1 all naval ferry barges ready for operations will be used. Orders for their transfer to Theodosia have been issued. They are twelve in number plus the Kerch naval ferry barges which it will probably be impossible to free from the ice. For the present the Army is expecting ten naval ferry barges. Other craft unsuitable. The preparation of shipments to Theodosia will take the Army about a week.

Further Information:

Army Commands are advised that the dispatch of supplies from Theodosia as proposed

- a. greatly depends on the weather,
- b. is severely exposed to enemy countermeasures,
- c. can only be performed by making full use of vessels and shipping,
- d. is very limited in capacity and can therefore only be regarded as a partial substitute for the Kerch-Taman traffic now at a standstill.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 41 A I. "

In order to fulfill these new tasks I have made the following arrangements and issued orders as follows:

"I.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea.  
Commander, Crimea, Caucasus.  
Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla.  
Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.

1. Now that the Kerch-Taman supply traffic has been suspended it is proposed to organize traffic from Theodosia to the south coast of the Taman Peninsula.
2. For this purpose all naval ferry barges of the 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla ready for action should be transferred to Theodosia as quickly as possible. Discharge all material on board at once unless it is destined for Theodosia or intermediate ports. Take on no fresh cargo. Study the weather forecasts very thoroughly.
3. Commander, Convoys and Escorts and Commander, Crimea/Caucasus must report naval ferry bargo numbers by return and the provisional date of their arrival in Theodosia.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. All measures must be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 307 A I."

"II.

Sea Transportation Section, Taman.

1. Once traffic between Kerch and Taman has been suspended, supply traffic from Theodosia to the southwest corner of the Taman Peninsula by naval ferry barge must be organized.
2. Sea Transportation Section, Taman, together with the Staff of General Reinhardt, will immediately examine the coast between Cape Panagiya and Shelyesniy Rog to discover a suitable landing place where a landing stage could be constructed. Look out for shoals or rocks off the coast. Immediately establish communication with the Staff of General Reinhardt who has already received the necessary instructions from Commanding Admiral, Crimea.
3. Request report as soon as possible.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 306 A I."

The Army intends to lay an ice road from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka as soon as the covering of fast ice is strong enough. Since the route is mainly over shallow water and since there are quite large quantities of iron to be transported, transports might be exposed to the danger of magnetic moored mines.

Therefore request Air Force Staff, Crimea to sweep the sea area selected as an ice road for possible non-contact mines.

The proposed new supply route Theodosia-Taman Peninsula leads between Cape Takil and Shelyesniy Rog directly north of the Russian declared areas. It is therefore imperative that the route should be swept before opening it to traffic.

The 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla has been ordered to transfer 2 boats for this task to Theodosia as quickly as possible.

2031

Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes made the following situation report:

- "1. Two columns under the command of Lt. Cdrs. Stiege and Quedenfeld are proceeding from Krapotkin to Tichorezk.

CONFIDENTIAL

-40-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

2. The remainder of the Motor Transport Battalion and Naval Communications Company 104 are at Krapotkin. Further progress impeded by snow drifts and 17° of frost.
3. Parts of the train loaded with goods at Mineralny Vody were burned out as a result of an air attack. Extent of damage yet to be assessed. Ostensibly no personnel lost.
4. Loading of goods at Voroshilovsk approved for 18 January, but still very doubtful whether the necessary trucks will be there.
5. Naval Shore Commander arrived at Krapotkin on 16 January. On 17 January it was planned to make for Slavanskaya since the Army produced the necessary fuel."

CONFIDENTIAL

-41-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

18 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0736 Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:  
Ghelenjik harbor: 1 freighter of 800 tons, 4 coastal vessels, several boats.
- 0741- A reconnaissance plane south of Ghelenjik  
0755 sighted several small freighters and coastal vessels, mainly on a southeasterly course.
- 0757 Tuapse harbor: 1 destroyer of new construction, 1 freighter of 5-4,000 tons of new construction, 1 merchant ship of 4,000 tons, 1 merchant ship of 3,000 tons, 2 merchant ships each of 1,500 tons, 2 merchant ships each of 1,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 19 motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s. Off the harbor installations 1 freighter of 2,500 tons and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons entering harbor.
- 0845 Poti harbor: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser, 1 floating dock with a heavy cruiser, 1 cruiser hull, 2 freighters of 4,000 tons. In the southern part apparently 4 ships with steam up.
- 0853 Ochemchiri harbor: 2 freighters of 1,000 tons each.
- 0900 Sukhum harbor: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons with steam up, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,600 tons and 20 boats, 1 tanker of 5,000 tons, 1 floating dock. In grid square 03231, 5 miles west of Sukhum, 1 coastal vessel of 400 tons, course southeast, slow speed.
- 0914 Sochi harbor: 7 motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s, 1 freighter of 800 tons.  
Grid square 94441, 4 miles west of Sochi, 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast, medium speed.  
Grid square 94332, 10 miles northwest of Sochi, 1 M.T.B., course northwest, medium speed.
- 0940 Grid square 85861, 5 miles west of Tuapse, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 3 motor minesweepers, course southeast, low speed.

Air Force Staff reported the following sorties. 1 plane carried out reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea: 41° 54' N, 43° 30' N, 37° 00' E, 34° 00' E. Visibility greatly

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

hampered by the weather. No sighting reports. 1 plane carried out reconnaissance over the central Black Sea between 42° 30' N, 44° 45' N, 31° 30' E, 33° 30' E. Poor visibility. No sighting reports.

Radio intercept service reported 5 submarines central to western Black Sea. No surface force activity detected.

Comments:

The exceedingly large quantity of shipping in Tuapse harbor is most significant. At present, in addition to small craft, steamers of some 20,000 G.R.T. and 2 destroyers are anchored there. Presumably the steamers in question have been assembled at Tuapse for the forthcoming landing operation. The radio intercept and reconnaissance reports throw no light on enemy plans.

Own Situation:

0745 Teletype received from Quartermaster General, Army High Command:

"The Führer has ordered goods and supplies to be transferred from Kerch to Anapa for unloading. The necessary measures will be taken immediately. Out Station South reported measures under way.

Army High Command, Quartermaster General,  
Qu.I.1450/45 Gkdos."

I presume that this order is only a general directive for taking supplies to the south coast of the Taman Peninsula as already agreed upon between Admiral, Black Sea and the Army Commands involved. Kerch cannot be considered as a starting point for the new supply route on account of the ice conditions prevailing there.

0900 Port Commander, Kerch reported that ice conditions in Kerch Strait had improved so that there are hopes of freeing the naval ferry barges which are frozen in. Ice reconnaissance by Storch plane showed that the southern part of Kerch Strait from Pavlovski as far as Cape Takil was free of ice except for marginal ice which sometimes juts out beyond the swept channel. According to the weather report of 1000 the wind will veer back again and the frost will increase. There is no prospect that the improvement in the ice situation will continue or that it will be possible to resume the traffic to Taman since a fast layer of ice completely covers Taman Bay. To avoid the naval ferry barges in Kerch from being exposed to air attack, which the past days have shown to be a particular menace there, and

CONFIDENTIAL

in order to have sufficient shipping available in the event of an increase in supply traffic to Anapa, I have ordered that every effort should be made to transfer the naval ferry barges fully ready for operations from Kerch to Theodosia. With the assistance of the icebreaker "Kiel", which left Theodosia for Kerch today, it should be possible to bring the naval ferry barges from the harbor and bay of Kerch into clear waters on 19 January.

The examination of the south coast of the Taman Peninsula by the Staff of General Reinhardt has shown that there are no suitable landing places for the proposed supply traffic from Theodosia. I have therefore decided to unload at Anapa with due consideration for the risks and disadvantages involved as reported in Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. Chofs. 41 A I (see War Diary dated 17 January). Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A was ordered, in cooperation with Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Port Commander, Anapa, to construct landing stages for the naval ferry barges in Anapa Bay. For the time being a daily shipment of 200 tons from Theodosia has been agreed on by the Army Commands concerned. To this end the necessary ferry barges are to be ready in Theodosia for loading from 20 January so that shipments may start as soon as the landing stages are ready.

Constantza

1500 U 24 put out for operations in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. Chofs. 37 A I (see War Diary, 15 January).

U 19 will be ready for operations on 21 January. Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla has received the following orders for this boat:

- "1. Operational area will be between Shache and Tuapse to within 40 miles of the coast.
2. Refuel on the outward and homeward passage will take place at Theodosia.
3. Course instructions to be followed on putting in to Theodosia: from  $44^{\circ} 46' N$ ,  $35^{\circ} 33' E$ , course  $350^{\circ}$  as far as point of intersection with route Brown, then via Brown 15 to Theodosia.
4. That the pilot vessel may be ready to bring U 19 in to Theodosia, report estimated time of arrival at Brown 15.
5. On receipt of the cover name "Panthersprung", U 19 will quickly occupy a reconnaissance line in  $44^{\circ} 40' N$  from  $36^{\circ} 0' E$  to  $36^{\circ} 30' E$ .

CONFIDENTIAL

-44-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

6. U 19's tasks as ordered in Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 37 A I for U 24.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 48-A I."

Air Force Staff, Crimea sanctioned my request for the ice road across Kerch Strait to be checked by a minesweeping plane. (See War Diary, 17 January.) Enemy air force activity was today confined to some reconnaissance flights.

A northeasterly wind, force 5-6, made it impossible to resume convoy traffic and make preparations for minelaying in the southern Kerch Strait.

CONFIDENTIAL

-45-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

19 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

0745- Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following  
0936 reports:

Grid square 85575, 4 miles south of Ghelenjik, ostensibly 1 minesweeper, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 coastal vessel, course southeast.

Off Tuapse-Ghelenjik: 1 coastal vessel, course southeast, 1 coastal vessel, course northwest.

Grid square 8585, 15 miles west of Tuapse, 1 freighter, 1 patrol vessel, course northwest.

Grid square 0582, 10 miles west of Sukhum, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, course northwest.

Grid square 9469, Gagri, and grid 9453, Sochi, 1 coastal vessel, course northwest.

Tuapse harbor: 2 freighters each of 1,500 tons, 2 freighters each of 1,000 tons, 7 coastal vessels totaling 4,000 tons, some motor minesweepers and M.F.B.s and 25 other boats.

0900 in grid square 0473, 30 miles west of Sukhum, 1 merchant ship of 1,500 tons, 1 guard boat, course northeast, low speed.

0950 Ghelenjik harbor: 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 5 coastal vessels.

Southeastern Black Sea: 1 plane carried out one reconnaissance of the sea area  $41^{\circ} 45' N$ ,  $43^{\circ} 15' N$ ,  $37^{\circ} 00' E$ ,  $39^{\circ} 00' E$ . No sighting reports.

Central Black Sea: 1 plane carried out one reconnaissance over the sea between  $42^{\circ} 50' N$ ,  $44^{\circ} 45' N$ ,  $32^{\circ} 00' E$ ,  $53^{\circ} 50' E$ . No sighting reports.

Situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza. According to radio intercept reports central to southern east coast, apart from movements of patrol and escort vessels, nothing identified. Central to eastern Black Sea 5 submarines, 2 of them on return passage. East coast 2 submarines intercepted.

CONFIDENTIAL

-46-

SECURITY INFORMATION

Comments:

Today's visual reconnaissance of Tuapse harbor revealed less shipping in port than on the previous day. The large assembly of shipping was therefore not in readiness for a landing operations but for the conveyance of supplies to the front at Tuapse-Novorossisk.

Own Situation:

The transfer of 16 naval ferry barges from Kerch to Theodosia took place today as a result of improved ice conditions in Kerch Strait. On 20 January, accordingly, 20 ferry barges will be at Theodosia to take part in the supply traffic to Anapa. I have instructed all stations concerned.

The transfer of the naval ferry barges to Theodosia means that this port will be very heavily occupied. The boats cannot be separated in order to lessen the danger of air attack because of the lack of space. Daily enemy air reconnaissance will certainly identify the concentration of shipping in port and heavy raids must be expected.

I have therefore requested Air Force Staff, Crimea to reinforce the anti-aircraft defenses and to be ready with the necessary fighter cover.

Improved weather enabled convoy traffic to resume full activity, including 2 convoys of steamers from Constantza to Sevastopol (totaling 15,000 G.R.T.).

The weather has been a great handicap to landing operations. With improved weather conditions, however, enemy operations must be expected to increase. The latest prisoners' reports suggest that the south coast of the Taman Peninsula will be chosen for landings.

1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to dispose 2 boats in a patrol line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula during the coming night. Since, at present, the flotilla has only 4 boats ready for operations, I am limiting myself to 2 boats so that, while the good weather lasts, at least 2 will always be available for operations.

Orders:

"Situation: With improved weather enemy landings are again to be expected. According to the latest information the south coast of the Taman Peninsula would be particularly endangered.

CONFIDENTIAL

Order:

1. Two boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will put out at 1600 today from Ivan Baba to occupy a reconnaissance line from 1900 in 45° 0' N from 36° 50' to 37° 7' E.
2. Observe enemy mine situation off Anapa and south of Kerch Strait.
3. If enemy encountered send "Most Immediate" report.
4. Valuable targets may be torpedoed.
5. Leave the reconnaissance line at 0500 on 20 January, and put in to Ivan Baba.
6. Should weather force re-entry prematurely, report by radiogram.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 344 A I."

To protect the landing stage in Strelitzkaya Bay from enemy attempts, it is to be mined from the land by 4 separately detonated groups of mines each consisting of 5 FMB mines.

The anti-torpedo barrage at Ivan Baba was again heavily damaged by heavy seas during the past few days. The Net Barrage Group, Black Sea was ordered to relay the barrage, using German nets.

2152

A decision must be made as to where the units of Naval Shore Commanders, Xerxes and Caucasus, returning from the Caucasus and released by the Army, are to be transferred. The matter should be considered in the light of the following points:

1. During the past months many Army units have been withdrawn from the Crimea which has also weakened the harbor defenses. Admiral, Black Sea was therefore obliged to withdraw 150 men from Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine in December and send them as troops to Theodosia, a vital point in any defense against Russian landings.
2. Recent developments in the Army situation in the Caucasus have made it necessary to defend the remaining important Crimean ports more heavily than has of late been possible. The withdrawal of the units of the Naval Shore Commanders until recently in the Caucasus, is a good opportunity to do this. It is therefore proposed to send one Port Commander as additional emergency unit to Kerch and one to Sevastopol.

CONFIDENTIAL

-48-

SECURITY INFORMATION



3. The Port Commander, formerly at Ak Mechet, was withdrawn when the war in the Black Sea was thought to be nearly over. Now the area is again faced with dangers, Ak Mechet will have to have a Port Command again. The same applies to Shadovsk. This port must be regarded as of particular value to the Russians, since the Perekop Isthmus might well be sealed off from there.
4. Near Eupatoria, the danger of a Russian landing, with the object of occupying Simferopol, deserves specially careful consideration since there is a very good road there. For this reason Admiral, Black Sea has succeeded in obtaining accommodation in Eupatoria from Commanding Admiral, Crimea so that the remaining units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes and the administrative units of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus may be transferred there. Thus Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes would, to some extent, be able to maintain a centralized control over his units and supervise their training during the coming period.
5. One of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes' principal depots remains in Mariupol. It would therefore be indicated to reinforce Port Command, Mariupol with a Port Command from Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes. Another point in favor of taking this action is that the Army situation might once again call for the reinforcement of the north coast of the Sea of Azov. For this reason it is also intended to re-station the two 15.2 cm. batteries of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes on the north coast of the Sea of Azov, namely at Port Mariupol and at Berdyansk where they were before.
6. An additional argument for the above decisions was that the Rostov-Melitopol area was very largely claimed by the Army leaving very little accommodation for the Navy. It was intended to billet the 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion at Mariupol for the repair and refit of their vehicles. This fell through, however, so that a request had to be submitted for the withdrawal of this battalion to Germany. Only the 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion which is undergoing a thorough overhaul in Melitopol will, until further notice, remain in the area. This battalion has also had billeting difficulties because the buildings it prepared were claimed for hospital purposes. They will have to be content with rather inadequate accommodation which will have to be transformed into billots again.

CONFIDENTIAL

7. Once the above measures have been carried out, the defense of the harbors in the area of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea/Ukraine should be adequately guaranteed. The emergency units formed by the Port Commanders from the formations returning from the Caucasus, will considerably reinforce our naval installations.

A similar report has been submitted to Group South.

CONFIDENTIAL

-50-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

20 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0635 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported no enemy ships in the Kerch-Novorossisk area.
- 0640 Ghelenjik harbor: 4 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s, 4 coastal vessels, 1 vessel of 800 tons.
- 0800 No enemy ships in the Ochamchiri-Batum area.
- 0805 Ochamchiri harbor: 2 merchant ships of 1,000 tons, 2 motor minesweepers, 1 coastal vessel.
- 0810 The destroyer reported at 1815 EET on 19 January by radio intercept service, was located at 0714 EET in the Tuapse area.
- 0812 Grid square 1317, 12 miles south of Sukhum, Air Force Staff, Crimea detected 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 1 tug, course 120°, medium speed.
- 0830 Grid square 0471, 5 miles west of Gagri, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 2 escort boats, course 310°, medium speed.  
Grid square 04710, 10 miles southwest of Gagri, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 3 escort boats, course 310°, low speed.
- 0835 Grid square 94620, south of Sochi, 1 coastal vessel, 1 patrol vessel, course 310°, medium speed.
- 0915 Grid square 0321, 20 miles west of Sukhum, 1 merchant ship of 1,500 tons, 1 motor minesweeper, course 310°, low speed.
- 0935 Tuapse harbor: 2 merchant ships of 1,500 tons each, 1 of them with steam up, 2 merchant ships of 1,000 tons each, 1 merchant ship of 2,500-3,000 tons, 7 coastal vessels, 2 minesweepers, 3 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s.
- 0937 Grid square 9462, 10 miles south of Sochi, 1 coastal vessel, 1 guard boat, course 310°, medium speed.
- 0940 Grid square 85590, 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, 1 coastal vessel, 1 motor minesweeper in 120°, medium speed.
- 0945 Ghelenjik harbor: 4 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s, 4 coastal vessels, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 3 landing craft.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1145 Grid square 1384, i.e. Poti harbor, 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser with steam up.
- 1640 1614 radio intercept service obtained a bearing on a destroyer along the line Theodosia-Tuapse.
- 1715 Another destroyer in the Tuapse area, central east coast 1 torpedoboat identified.
- 1845 1800 a destroyer was intercepted sending a message in the southeastern Black Sea. Growing submarine activity since the afternoon. Ten submarines intercepted so far, probably 5 off the east coast and 5 in the central to western Black Sea.
- 1915 According to radio traffic cruiser "A" is probably at sea, presumably central to southern east coast.

Comments:

Supply traffic continued to be lively off the Caucasus coast. Identification by air reconnaissance of a battleship and a heavy cruiser with steam up at 1145 in Poti harbor, did not warrant any special measures being ordered for the coming night since, even should the ships be obliged to force their speed to as much as 17 knots, they could not reach the Taman or Crimean coast before daybreak. Moreover cruiser "A", identified by radio intelligence in the central to southern Black Sea, would have been too far away to carry out a landing operation during the night.

Own Situation:

Novorossisk

- 0200 Seven M.T.B.s attacked Novorossisk harbor; protective fire set 1 boat alight. No report received of German losses or of the extent of the damage sustained.

Ivan Baba

- 0804 E-boats S 52 and S 102 put in from the patrol line south of the Taman Peninsula. The boats were in position from 1900 to 0500. A moonlight night and very good visibility revealed no enemy vessels.
- 1015 An enemy torpedo plane attacked the wreck of a Russian minelayer beached on the shores of Eupatoria Bay. Torpedo succeeded in hitting the wreck.

CONFIDENTIAL

-52-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

1114 In answer to my request (see War Diary 19 January) Air Force Staff, Crimea replied that a heavy anti-aircraft battery was today transferred to Theodosia to reinforce the anti-aircraft defenses, but additional fighters cannot at present be spared. The 43rd Rumanian Fighter Staffel with 14 planes, is responsible for the defense of the whole area.

1200 Two boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered once again to occupy a patrol line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula on the night of 21 January.

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that, in view of the particular danger to which naval ferry barges were exposed, the Army Group would only make use of the Theodosia-Anapa supply route in emergencies. Less ferry barges will therefore now be needed at Theodosia. To prevent the port from being overcrowded which brings the danger of air attack, I have ordered 4 barges to be transferred to Yalta and 4 to Sevastopol from where they can be very quickly withdrawn if needed.

1315 Near Green 26, some 10 miles northeast of Bugaz, the Russian torpedo plane unsuccessfully attacked the steamer "Arcadia" proceeding from Odessa to Constantza escorted by 2 Rumanian gunboats and 3 naval ferry barges.

Kerch-Taman

In addition to normal reconnaissance activity which caused repeated alarms in the Crimean ports, the enemy attacked the supply ports of Kerch Strait at various times today. Between 0650 and 1300 Taman was raided 3 times and 12 bombs were dropped without causing any damage. Kerch was raided twice and 38 bombs dropped, several houses destroyed and civilians killed; 1 Siebel ferry was damaged, otherwise no naval damage.

2000 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that it had so far been impossible to tow in E-boats S 40 and S 52, held fast in the ice near Braila (see War Diary 15 January). An attempt will be made to cut a channel in one of the side arms of the Danube where the boats will be protected against drift ice.

Before supply traffic starts between Theodosia and Anapa, the route from Cape Takil eastward must be checked for moored mines. For this task I have ordered motor minesweepers R 165, R 164 and R 30 to go to Theodosia where they should arrive in the coming night and receive my operational orders which are not only to swoop

CONFIDENTIAL

-53-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

the route but also to check the sea area intended as a minefield in the southern part of Kerch Strait:

- "1. Motor minesweepers R 165, R 164 and R 30, under the command of Lieutenant (s.g.) Glaser, will perform the following task on 21 January:
  - a. 0700 they will leave Ivan Baba and proceed via route Brown to Brown 18.
  - b. They will then sweep the route from 45° 5' N, 36° 28.5' E via 45° 6' N, 36° 41' E via 45° 4' N, 36° 47' E via 45° 3.5' N, 36° 59' E and back. They will mark the route by a central line of buoys, with 5 meter pendant. If mines found send "Most Immediate" report and try to by-pass the minefield.
  - c. Having completed their task the minesweepers will anchor near Cape Takil.
  - d. On 22 January the motor minesweepers will check the following course from 45° 5' N, 36° 28.5' E via 45° 6.7' N, 36° 28.5' E via 45° 8.5' N, 36° 35.6' E to 45° 7' N, 36° 36.5' E. They will use 5 meter pendant. If mines encountered send "Most Immediate" report. Identify position and extent of the minefield. On completion put in to Ivan Baba.
2. Enemy situation: Attacks by Russian planes to be anticipated on light forces.
3. No German naval forces east of Cape Takil. German shipping to be expected on route Brown.
4. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Port Commander, Anapa will ensure that the coastal defenses on the south coast of the Taman Peninsula are informed of the presence of the motor minesweepers on 21 and 22 January.
5. R 165 will report to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea time of return from Cape Takil to Ivan Baba on 22 January.

Admiral, Black Sea Gidos. 377 A I."

Today's air reconnaissance of ice conditions revealed that the ice in Taman Bay and in the Cape Kroni-Tomriuk area is still fast and unbroken. The attempt made by the tug "Kiel" to cut a channel to Taman failed.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

21 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 0730 Ghelenjik harbor: 5 motor minesweepers, 11 M.T.B.s, 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,200 tons, 20 boats.
- 0815 Sochi harbor: 2 coastal vessels.
- 0825 Grid square 94330, 15 miles northwest of Sochi, 1 merchant ship of 2,000 tons, 2 guard boats, course southeast, medium speed.
- 0902 Tuapse harbor: 5 minesweepers, 4 motor minesweepers, 12 M.T.B.s, 1 merchant ship of 5,000 tons, 1 merchant ship of 4,000 tons, 2 merchant ships of 1,500 tons each, 1 floating crane, 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons, several boats, off the harbor 1 merchant ship of 1,500 tons.
- 0915 Grid square 85540, 10 miles south of Ghelenjik, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, course northwest, low speed.  
Along the coast: 5 coastal vessels, course northwest, 3 coastal vessels, course southeast. Otherwise, up to a distance of 80 kilometers out to sea, no other shipping detected.
- 11.03 Grid square 8559, 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, 1 destroyer, 1 patrol vessel, course north.
- 1230- Poti harbor: seen through gaps in the clouds,  
1300 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser hull, 2 destroyers, 1 floating dock, 1 heavy cruiser not clearly visible.
- 1525 Grid square 0321, 18 miles west of Sukhum, 1 tanker of 600 tons, course 150°.
- 1328 Grid square 0479, 25 miles westnorthwest of Sukhum, 3 merchant ships of 800 to 1,500 tons, 2 patrol vessels, course 150°.
- 1535 Grid square 9469, 12 miles west of Gagri, 1 tanker of 2,000 tons, 2 minesweepers, course northwest.
- 1405 Grid square 8581, 20 miles northwest of Tuapse, 1 small tanker, several coastal vessels, course northwest.

CONFIDENTIAL

According to radio intercept reports 1 destroyer central east coast. Apart from 2 minelayers and small vessels in the coastal area nothing identified. Central to western Black Sea and east coasts, 2 submarines in each area and 1 further submarine intercepted, position unknown.

Comments:

Air reconnaissance and radio intelligence reports were without special significance. Supply traffic identified did not exceed normal. Shipping in Tuapse was still remarkably heavy.

Own Situation:

Ivan Baba

0740 E-boats S 51 and S 102 put in from the patrol line assigned to them. Weather was favorable, visibility moderate and the boats were south of the Taman Peninsula from 1900 to 0400. No enemy traffic was observed.

1000 Commanding Admiral, Crimea reported that according to Army Group A, preparations and loading operations were observed at Tuapse.

In view of the abnormal amount of shipping in port the observation is credible. Since, apart from the fact that there is a full moon, the weather favors landing operations, I have decided in the coming night to occupy a patrol line off the south coast of the Crimea between Theodosia and Cape Takil in addition to the line previously occupied off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula.

Orders to 1st E-Boat Flotilla:

"Situation: Shipping in Tuapse harbor has been unusually heavy for some days. Moreover, preparations and loading operations have been observed and lively shipping activity detected between Poti and Tuapse for quite some time. Hence, enemy landing operations are to be expected, particularly since, apart from the phase of the moon, the weather is at present favorable.

Orders:

1. On the night of 22 January 2 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a reconnaissance line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula, as ordered in Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 544 A I dated 19 January.

CONFIDENTIAL

-56-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

2. a. From 1900 2 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a reconnaissance line in 44° 53' N from 35° 40' N to 36° 5' E.
  - b. Boats will leave the reconnaissance line at 0500 on 22 January.
  - c. Procedure in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 344.
3. For information:  
Motor minesweepers of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will sweep the route Cape Takil, Shelyosniy Rog, Banka Maria Magdalena and back on the afternoon of 21 January and then weigh anchor near Takil.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 397 A I."

- 1300 Two FZ-groups put out from Sevastopol for Theodosia. The groups are to check the mined area at the southern exit from Kerch Strait for FZ mines.
- 1345 U 19 put out from Constantza on operations in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chofs. 50 A I (see War Diary, 20 January).
- 1431 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported an air raid on Anapa; 88 bombs were dropped near the harbor; 1 killed, one 2 cm. anti-aircraft gun damaged.
- 1500 The Constantza-Sevastopol steamer convoys put in to Sevastopol without further incident.
- 1715 Motor minesweeper R 165 reported that the supply route from Cape Takil eastward was swept and buoyed as ordered. No mines swept.
- 1800 Commanding Admiral, Crimea ordered the first degree of alarm for the coming night because of the landing identified at Tuapse.
- 2012 E-boat S 26 reported from the reconnaissance line south of the Taman coast: 1 engine out of order, maximum speed 12 miles. The 2 boats were ordered to put in to Ivan Baba. Since the patrol line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula is particularly important (presumably the Taman coast would be primarily involved in the event of enemy landings) the 2 boats standing to the south of the Crimean coast were ordered to occupy the patrol line south of the Taman coast immediately.
- Air Situation. Slight enemy air activity in the Kerch-Taman area by day. Five raids, about 15 bombs dropped, no damage. In addition, reconnaissance planes over the southern coast of the Crimea.

22 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 1155 According to a radio intercept report an unknown vessel was identified at 1155 off the central east coast.
- Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:
- 1215 3 tankers in Batum roads.
- 1235 Poti harbor: 1 heavy cruiser in dock, 1 battleship, 3 destroyers, 1 tanker of 4,000 tons, 1 minesweeper putting out on a southeasterly course.
- 1245 Ochamchiri harbor: 2 submarines, 1 tanker of 1,000 tons.
- 1257 Sukhum harbor: 1 tanker of 2,000 tons.  
Sukhum roads: 1 heavy cruiser.
- 1310 Adler: 3 merchant ships of 800 tons each, 2 M.T.B.s, 1 patrol vessel on a northerly course.
- 1311 Grid square 9453, 20 miles west of Adler, 1 torpedoboat, course southeast.
- 1344 Grid square 9577, 5 miles southeast of Tuapse, 1 tanker of 1,500 tons, 1 patrol vessel, course southeast.
- 1357 Grid square 9436, 10 miles west of Sochi, 1 tanker of 6,000 tons.
- 1402 Grid square 8557, 20 miles south of Ghelenjik, 1 steamer of 2,000 tons, course southeast.
- 1408 Grid square 7553, 30 miles southsouthwest of Ghelenjik, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 1 tanker of 1,000 tons heading for Ghelenjik.
- 1750 According to a radio intercept report 1 destroyer at 1730 off Tuapse.

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

One plane made 1 reconnaissance of the eastern Black Sea over the sea area 41° 45' N - 45° 30' N - 36° 00' E - 38° 30' E. Nothing to report.

One plane made a reconnaissance of the central Black Sea over 42° 30' N - 44° 45' N - 32° 00' E - 35° 00' E. Nothing to report.

CONFIDENTIAL

Situation report: An unidentified vessel with Commanding Admiral, Light Forces on board was intercepted at noon off the central east coast; in the evening 1 destroyer. In the coastal area activity of patrol vessels and small craft increased. One submarine was intercepted in the central to western Black Sea area and one off the east coast.

Comments:

The main body of the Russian Fleet continues to remain at its bases. Shipping identified did not exceed normal.

Own Situation:

Ivan Baba

- 0330 E-boats S 26 and S 49 put in to port. S 26 out of action because of damage to bearings.
- 0942 S 51 and S 102 returned from the reconnaissance line assigned to them (see War Diary 21 January). A clear moonlight night with good visibility revealed no enemy forces.
- 1155 Two boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to occupy a reconnaissance line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula again during the coming night.
- 1450 Aerial torpedo attack on a convoy assembling off Sulina. Steamer "Koloszvar" hit aft by a torpedo; 3 anti-aircraft gunners, 3 soldiers of the convoy and 7 Hungarian members of the crew reported missing; the bodies of 2 anti-aircraft gunners were recovered. The "Koloszvar" was towed ashore outside the north mole.

Enemy aerial torpedo attacks have increased of late. One gains the impression that the enemy is using torpedo planes for air/sea reconnaissance, thereby achieving two objects. Moreover it is surmised that air force operations are also under British influence. I view the continued vigorous and systematic use of the aerial torpedo weapon as a grave threat to our convoys which are but poorly protected against it.

Lighter 1357, which went aground in Ak Mechet Bay on 9 December, was towed clear and salvaged by the tugs "Stralsund" and "Netty".

As a result of considerable movement of the ice in Korch Strait some 20 mines have recently been swept from Pavlovski minefield. Other mines are known to have gone because our own vessels approached them. Thus the minefield has become

CONFIDENTIAL

less effective. Since new mine sections are, in any case, to be laid in the southern part of Kerch Strait and the work is already in progress and the Pavlovski minefield endangers German shipping, I have ordered the remaining mines to be swept. It is not at present intended to relay the minefield because even without it Kerch Strait is sufficiently defended by coastal guns. Group South has approved this measure.

1600 Motor minesweepers R 165, R 164 and R 30 put in to Ivan Baba after check-sweep of the minefield south of Kerch Strait (see Admiral, Black Sea Gidos. 577 A I, para. 1d, War Diary, 20 January). No mines swept.

2100 The 2 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were forced to leave their reconnaissance line because of increasingly heavy seas and strong swell, SSW winds, and return to Ivan Baba.

2545 They put in to Ivan Baba.

The ice situation in Kerch Strait is unchanged despite the mild weather. For this reason Kerch-Taman traffic could not be resumed.

Naval Shore Commander, Zerkos reported that he had arrived at Mariupol with approximately 90% of his units.

CONFIDENTIAL

-60-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

23 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 0701 Grid square 9417, 17 miles south of Tuapse, 1 merchant ship of approximately 5,000 tons, 1 large patrol vessel, course 130<sup>o</sup>, medium speed.
- 0710 Grid square 9446, Sochi, 2 merchant ships of 1,000 tons each in the roads, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons in harbor.
- 0925 Tuapse harbor: 2 merchant ships of 1,500 tons each, several motor minesweepers, M.T.B.s and coastal vessels.
- 1050 Tuapse harbor: 1 freighter of 2,000 tons.
- 1310 Grid square 0521, 20 miles west of Sukhum, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 1 patrol vessel, course southeast.
- 1320 Grid square 0478, 15 miles southsoutheast of Gagri, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 2 patrol vessels, course southeast.  
Grid square 9468, 12 miles southwest of Adler, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons.
- 1330 Grid square 9455, 30 miles southsouthwest of Adler, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons, 1 minesweeper, 4 patrol vessels.
- 2315 According to radio intercept service the large destroyer "Charkov" and Commanding Admiral, Light Forces aboard an unidentified vessel are apparently at sea. At 2346 a bearing was obtained on the latter in the Batum direction. Radio traffic was noticeably slight.

Air Force Staff, Crimea carried out reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea. Between 1000 and 1300 one plane was over the area as in War Diary 22 January. No sighting reports.  
Central Black Sea: 1 plane made a reconnaissance of the area as in War Diary 22 January. No sighting reports.

Comments:

No radio intelligence or sighting reports of any importance, normal traffic. Harbor and coastal reconnaissance were greatly impeded so that the

CONFIDENTIAL

-61-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

fleet's bases were not examined. There are no signs of plans for any operations on a fairly large scale by the enemy fleet.

Own Situation:

The FZ-group has completed sweeping operations off Constantza in preparation for the reinforcement of the Constantza minefields; 1 mine, and 2 explosive buoys were swept.

1008 The following report was received from Naval Shore Commander, Kerxes:

1. All his motor transports, including personnel and material, and Operations Group Gramer, also unimportant stragglers with material, have passed through Rostov for the west.
2. Port Commander 17 will travel from Mariupol to Sevastopol by rail on 23 January.
3. 1st and 3rd Naval Batteries with two 7.5 cm. guns and two 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns each, have taken up their headquarters as ordered at Berdyansk West and Mariupol Port.
4. Additional transportation from Mariupol is being made ready by road or rail, according to the condition of the roads.

The increased use of torpedo planes by the Russians during the last few days has compelled us to take defensive measures for the supply steamers lying in harbor at Sevastopol, since their chief berth, the coaling wharf, is exposed to aerial torpedo attacks. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea has therefore been ordered, in cooperation with the Net Barrage Group, Black Sea, to safeguard the berths at the coaling wharf as quickly as possible by a double anti-torpedo net barrage and, until the nets are ready, to have lighters with the greatest possible draught lie alongside the steamers.

1100 Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported a shaft broken in S 49 and that she would have to put in to dock at Constantza; at 2000 he received orders to proceed. Since S 26 is also disabled through damage to her bearings, there are at present only 2 boats in a state of readiness.

1200 Port Commander, Yalta reported that the Harbor Defense Flotilla identified an enemy minefield immediately off the coast between Yalta and Cape Aitodor south of the swept channel. The flotilla cut 8 mines. The type of mine revealed that here was a new minefield laid by submarine (submarine

CONFIDENTIAL

-62-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

shaft laid mines). Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 164, which put in to Ivan Baba at 1600 on 22 January after the completion of their mine-sweeping operations south of Kerch Strait, have received orders to make quickly for Yalta and to sweep the minefield on 25 January and also the approach to Yalta and route Brown between Yalta and Cape Aitodor.

- 1200 Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to occupy a patrol line from 1900 to 0500 on the night of 24 January off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula.
- 1500 Port Commander, Kerch reported that the ice-breaker "Kiel" had today cut a channel to Taman and had then returned from Taman to Kerch with 3 loaded Siebel ferries. The channel lies between Kossa Chuchka and Tuzla, somewhat south of the normal supply route. I have therefore requested Air Force Staff, Crimea to send a minesweeping Ju plane to check this route on 24 January. If the ice situation does not grow worse in the coming night, supply traffic will be resumed on 24 January by the naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries lying at Kerch.
- 1500 The steamer "Kolozvar" was towed into the Sulina channel and docked by mole 2. She will start discharging her load of scrap metal and ballast on 24 January.
- 1900 Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch today started sweeping Pavlovski minefield. No mines swept so far.
- 2205 The 2 E-boats in the patrol line reported that they had turned back and were putting in to Ivan Baba at 2400. The reason for their putting in was not given. I presume that the deteriorating weather made them abandon their patrol.
- 2219 S 49, proceeding to Constantza, reported that she had had to put in to Ivan Baba again because of the weather.
- 2330 The towed convoy from Ak Mechet to Sevastopol (tugs "Netty" and "Stralsund" with lighter) escorted by naval ferry barges F 125 and 309, was attacked by a submarine 12 miles westnorthwest of Cape Eupatoria. Two torpedoes missed F 125: the first of them was outmaneuvered, the second passed under the target. The submarine then fired at the convoy with her guns and scored some insignificant hits on the tugs and lighter, causing no casualties. The escort vessels returned fire with 7.5 cm. and 2 cm. guns. F 125 reported that the 7.5 cm. gun scored a hit on the submarine which immediately submerged. Eight depth charges were dropped where she submerged without visible effect.

CONFIDENTIAL

24 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 0923 Grid square 9574, Tuapse harbor, 1 merchant ship of 4,000 tons, 1 merchant ship of 2,000 tons, 7 coastal vessels presumably of 3,000 tons, 30 boats, 2 minesweepers.
- 0925 Grid square 8586, 5 miles west of Tuapse, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 1 patrol vessel, course southeast.
- 0935 Grid square 8555, 15 miles southsoutheast of Ghelonjik, 1 merchant ship of approximately 1,000 tons, motor minesweepers, 1 patrol vessel, course southeast, low speed.
- 0730- Grid square 0479, 20 miles southeast of Gagri,  
0935 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 1 patrol vessel, course northwest, low speed.  
Grid square 0325, 15 miles southwest of Sukhum, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 3 patrol vessels, course northwest, low speed.  
Grid square 9462, 8 miles west of Adler, 1 freighter of 800 tons, course southeast, low speed.
- 1235 Batum harbor: 1 heavy cruiser, probably another cruiser, not accurately identified, large destroyer "Charkov", 2 freighters or tankers each of 1,000 tons, 1 merchant ship of 5,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 1 tanker of 2,000 tons leaving port.
- 1320 Poti harbor: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in dock, 2-3 destroyers, 1 floating dock putting out with 2 tugs, 1 cruiser hull.
- 1330 Grid square 1336, 5 miles south of Ochemchiri, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, in ballast, and 2 patrol vessels, course southeast.
- 1335 Sukhum harbor: 1 destroyer and 1 freighter of 2,000 tons.
- 1355 Grid square 9461, 15 miles west of Adler, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 3 patrol vessels, course 310°.
- 1400 Grid square 9432, 20 miles northwest of Sochi, 1 tanker of 3-4,000 tons, 3 patrol vessels, course 310°.

CONFIDENTIAL

-64-

SECRET INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

1715 One destroyer was identified at sea by radio intercept service probably southeastern Black Sea. She sent out an unidentified short signal to Batum.

Situation report: Northern to southern east coast continuous activity of patrol and escort vessels; 1 destroyer probably identified in the Batum area during the evening.

Two submarines, position unknown, intercepted at sea.

Comments:

Air reconnaissance intercepted the main body of the Russian Fleet at about 1300 in the harbors of Poti and Batum so that the Crimean or Taman coasts could not be the target of an operation. Furthermore, there was lively shipping traffic off the Caucasus coast, which was today proceeding mainly in a southeasterly direction.

Own Situation:

0006 E-boats S 51 and S 102 put in to Ivan Baba. From 1847 the boats occupied the reconnaissance line as ordered off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula but were obliged to break off the operation at about 2100 owing to southsouthwest winds, force 5, sea 4, and heavy swell from the southwest.

0700 Naval ferry barge No. 323 equipped with towed loop gear, proceeding from Kerch to Theodosia in Kerch Strait near Yeltungen, struck a non-contact mine and sank. The escort vessel WM 4008 was only able to rescue 2 men, one seriously injured and one slightly injured. The heavy loss of personnel is because the mine exploded right under the ship's stern and a large number of the crew were below deck. As a result of this incident I have again ordered the forces under my command, when proceeding through danger areas, to keep the crew, except for the watch which must be below deck, on the upper deck wearing their life jackets.

1157 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus sent information that the site requested by us at Anapa for the unloading of 5-ton loads is ready to receive the Theodosia-Anapa supply traffic. Thus the first naval ferry barges can proceed on 25 January if the weather is favorable.

I intend the groups to leave Theodosia so as to reach Cape Takil shortly before dusk, anchor there and continue at daybreak the next day with minesweeper and FZ-boat escort for Anapa. After

CONFIDENTIAL

hastily unloading, the return passage must be undertaken in such a way that by dusk the same day they are back at Cape Takil again.

1602 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 164 swept another 8 inertia contact mines laid by submarine shaft from the enemy minefield near Yalta. The minefield is situated between 44° 27.6' N, 34° 10' E and 44° 28' N, 34° 11.2' E. The boats were ordered to check the harbor approach to Yalta and route Brown between points 6 and 7 on 25 January.

1900 The ice situation in Kerch Strait has greatly improved during the day. With the icebreaker "Hiel", 2 naval ferry barges and 6 Siebel ferries were able to proceed with supplies from Kerch to Taman and 1 ferry barge and 11 Siebel ferries were able to make the return passage with freight from Taman to Kerch.

The weather forecast predicts a fresh cold spell and strong northeasterly winds for the morning of 25 January, thus by 26 January making a landing on Taman once again impossible because the ice will be causing fresh difficulties.

I have therefore decided, in addition to the vessels today loaded in Kerch, on 25 January to transfer the 8 naval ferry barges lying in Theodosia to Taman to be unloaded. Having unloaded, the ferry barges will at once return to Theodosia in order to be at readiness there for the Theodosia-Anapa supply traffic lest the period of frost anticipated from the general weather forecast should bring the Kerch-Taman traffic to a standstill.

Orders:

1. All naval ferry barges in Theodosia which are fully ready for operations will transfer to Taman on 25 January under Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.
2. They must arrange to leave Theodosia to reach Cape Takil at 0900.
3. Commander, Danube Flotilla will provide at least 3 PL-groups at 0900 at Cape Takil for the minesweeper escort as far as Pavlovski. He will report by radiogram to Admiral, Black Sea and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla should the weather prevent him from having this escort. In that case the formation of naval ferry barges will proceed by way of the prescribed swept channel close into the coast without minesweeper escort.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. Request Commander of the Army supply troops to ensure the immediate unloading of the boats at Taman.
5. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will bring back the naval ferry barges empty to Theodosia on 26 January. The barges must not be frozen in at Taman. The Commander of the flotilla will negotiate directly with the Commander of the Danube Flotilla regarding minesweeper escort for the return through Kerch Strait.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 473 A I."

2100

While sweeping Pavlovski minefield Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch cut two of our mines.

Naval High Command stated in AMA/M Wehr Tk 321 Geh. dated 14 January that the 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion, which because of the situation was granted leave until 30 April 1943, was subordinated to Army Group A for vital transport tasks.

Thereupon a report was sent to Group South that the 1st Company of the 1st Naval Motor Transport Battalion was still engaged on urgent transports for Naval Shore Commanders, Xerxes and Caucasus, after which it would have to be thoroughly overhauled. The remainder of the battalion was already at Melitopol awaiting overhaul and most of its vehicles were unfit for operations.

During December the 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion was engaged in uninterrupted operations by day and night over very bad roads with Army H.Q. I (Tanks) and then carried out the withdrawal to Mariupol of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes. Most of the vehicles arrived but more than 100 trucks still lie along the route. Since this naval motor transport battalion is in complete disrepair and there are no suitable quarters at Mariupol or any other place on the Azov coast for carrying out a thorough overhaul because the Army has commandeered everything, Group South was requested on 13 January to withdraw the naval motor transport battalion to Germany in order to refit it there for the tasks of early spring. In view of the general situation this appeared to be the only way of ensuring that the battalion would, in fact, be promptly available to the Navy again. As long as it remains here previous experience has shown that the Army is likely to claim serviceable vehicles for itself at any time.

CONFIDENTIAL

-67-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Now, on 24 January, Naval Liaison Officer, Quartermaster General South reported that, with the consent of Army High Command, Quartermaster General South has subordinated both naval motor transport battalions to himself and ordered them to remain in the area and transfer to Krivoy Rog for their repairs. Thus both naval motor transport battalions have now been withdrawn until further notice.

From previous experience it is now very doubtful whether these battalions will be fully ready in time for operations with the Naval Shore Commanders on the Caucasus coast or Caspian Sea. Group South is therefore requested to ensure that the Naval Shore Commanders can exchange any vehicles unfit for service for new long distance ones in the spring. Above all, all the French trucks which proved quite unsuitable in the Caucasus must be withdrawn. This year's tasks will be very much harder than last year's since still vaster areas over the worst possible roads will have to be covered before the Naval Shore Commanders reach the proposed operational ports. It may, under certain circumstances, be necessary to use a fresh naval motor transport battalion from home.

Since experience has shown that anti-aircraft alone is an inadequate defense against heavy aerial torpedo attacks, I have requested Air Force Staff, Crimea to supply fighter cover for important convoys. I would like to point out that the loss of further steamers will have serious consequences for Army supplies. Fighter cover should, in my opinion, during passage be concentrated off the Rumanian and Crimean coasts.

CONFIDENTIAL

-38-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

25 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 1130 Batum roads: 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 4 freighters each 2-3,000 tons.
- 1145 Poti harbor: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser.
- 1150 Poti harbor: 1 floating dock with heavy cruiser, much shipping in port, no details observed.
- 1200 Off the Chobi estuary: 3 freighters of 500 tons each, 1 destroyer, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons with 2 tugs.
- 1240 Tuapse harbor: 1 merchant ship of approximately 3,000 tons, 5 coastal vessels, several motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s.
- 1248 Grid square 8567, 25 miles northwest of Tuapse, 1 merchant ship of 1,500 tons and 2 patrol vessels, course 130°.
- 1315 Grid square 8573, 23 miles southsoutheast of Ghelenjik, 1 motor ship of 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 500 tons and 1 patrol vessel, course southeast.

There was no air reconnaissance over the Black Sea on 25 January owing to the weather.

Situation report: According to radio traffic no activity of surface forces identified. Slight activity of small craft in the coastal area. Central to western Black Sea, 2 submarines intercepted, and off the east coast 4.

Comments:

Today's air reconnaissance reports reveal remarkably little shipping in Tuapse harbor. The assumption that the steamers concentrated there during the past days were for landing operations is, accordingly, incorrect. They probably landed reinforcements and supplies at Tuapse for the Tuapse-Novorossisk front.

Own Situation:

Theodosia

- 0200 The formation of naval ferry barges put out for Taman. At 0600 approximately the boats had to

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

anchor west of Cape Takil because of fog. During the morning the wind freshened from the NE up to force 6. Their anchorage is sheltered so that the formation is in no danger.

1400 Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla who is in charge of the formation received the following directive:

1. The formation will anchor until early on the 26th and then proceed with improved visibility, weather permitting, to Taman; otherwise they must make for Theodosia.
2. Should they be discovered by enemy reconnaissance planes they must put in to Theodosia to prevent the vessels lying motionless from being attacked by aerial torpedoes.

1500 Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that the supply program for the supplying of the Caucasus armies (Stör program) would probably have to be altered because now that the troops have retired to the planned position (Gotenkopf), Temriuk is too close to the front and therefore cannot be used as a port of discharge.

Thus the entire supply organization and the returning transports will have to pass via the Kerch-Taman route. The harbor constructions planned in and near Taman will be inadequate for the increased demands.

I would therefore make the following requests about the work:

- a. Taman harbor: 4 bridges for loading and unloading lighters with a pier-head 80 meters long for naval ferry barges (as requested in the Stör program).
- b. Senava: 2 bridges (as earlier requested), plus a pier-head 60 meters long.
- c. At the fish-salting works: pier-head 60 meters long for naval ferry barges.

1700 Port Commander, Kerch reported that the naval ferry barges and Sicbel ferries which left Kerch this morning, ran into heavy drift ice off Taman Bay which was impassable; they had to return to Kerch.

In view of the extraordinary drop in the temperature the ice situation is expected to become rapidly more acute. The formation of naval ferry barges anchored near Takil has therefore been instructed to return to Theodosia.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

I have reported to Group South and to the Army Commands concerned as follows:

- "1. New ice difficulties have halted Kerch-Taman traffic. Naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries which set out today had to turn back to Kerch because of heavy drift ice off Taman.
2. Hence barges leaving Theodosia for Taman today were ordered to turn back.
3. If the weather improves it is intended to start supply traffic from Theodosia to Anapa.

Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. 486 A I."

Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 164 swept the approach to Yalta and route Brown between Yalta and Cape Aitodor but no mines were swept.

Russian air activity was today confined to reconnaissance sorties over Theodosia and Kerch.

CONFIDENTIAL

-71-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

26 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 1100 According to radio traffic at noon in the Tuapse area, 1 destroyer, 1 torpedoboat and 3 M.T.B.s were located at sea. No bearing obtained.
- 1150 Photographic evaluation by Air Force Staff, Crimea:  
Poti harbor: 1 battleship with steam up, 2 heavy cruisers ("Kirov" class), 1 of them with steam up, 2 cruiser hulls, 3 destroyers, 2 of them with steam up, 2 torpedoboats, 1 tanker of 6,000 tons, 1 submarine accommodation ship of 8,500 tons, 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons.  
Batum harbor: 1 heavy cruiser ("Krasny Kavkas"), 1 light cruiser ("Krasny Krim"), 4 submarines, 7 M.T.B.s, 1 submarine accommodation ship of 9,000 tons, 2 freighters of 6,000 tons each, 4 freighters of 4,000 tons each, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, 2 freighters of 2,000 tons each, 4 freighters of 1,500 tons each, 3 freighters of 1,000 tons each, 2 floating cranes, 9 coastal vessels totaling 7,000 tons.
- 1300 Grid square 9466, 5 miles south of Adler, 1 tanker of 3,000 tons, 1 minesweeper, 2 guard boats, course northwest, medium speed.

Situation report from Main Naval D/F Station:  
Central to southern east coast: 1 destroyer and lively activity of patrol and escort vessels identified by radio intercept service.  
Central to western Black Sea: 2 submarines intercepted, 1 off the central and 1 off the southern east coast.

Own Situation:

The bad weather (NE winds, force 6-8) has caused the cancellation of escort and minesweeping tasks and prevented operations by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla. Heavy frost has further aggravated the ice situation so that it will be impossible to resume supply traffic during the coming days.

Because of the weather FZ-groups cannot check for non-contact mines in the area south of Kerch Strait where it is planned to lay minefields.

CONFIDENTIAL

-72-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

That the minefields may be laid as quickly as possible I have requested Air Force Staff, Crimea to use the minesweeping plane.

In reply to my request of 24 January (see War Diary 24 January) Air Force Staff, Crimea stated that parts of the 43rd Rumanian Fighter Staffel have been transferred to Eupatoria for the protection of convoys and that Rumanian Air Force Command was endeavoring to supply fighters for the same work off the west coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-73-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

27 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

1430 Memel battery reported 2 minesweepers or patrol boats about 14 miles south of Cape Myshako and 2 more 8 miles away on an easterly course.

1545 At 1530 1 destroyer was identified by radio intercept service off the central east coast.

No enemy shipping identified during sea reconnaissance.

Coastal reconnaissance reported slight activity of coastal and patrol vessels off the central Caucasus coast. Shipping in the Caucasus harbors so far examined was as yesterday.

Main Naval D/F Station report:  
Central to southern east coast, activity of patrol and escort vessels persists. One destroyer south of Tuapse during the afternoon.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast: NE winds unabated, force 7-8, ice increasing in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov, impossible to resume convoys, supply traffic and minesweeping tasks.

1257 Port Commander, Mariupol reported that the ice road Taganrog-Kagalnik-Azov and Semibalko is in use and that the second ice road from Vesselo Vosnesenski to Margaritovka is under construction and will be completed by about 2 February.

According to Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A the Army Group intends to set up unloading staffs in Kerch and Taman for the large numbers of returning transports. Colonel Henke (Regimental Commander Assault Battalion) has been appointed to control the operations of the numerous combined operations craft (such as Siebel ferries, large combined operations craft, heavy and light vessels). In my opinion the Navy must be strongly represented within this new Army organization if naval interests are to be preserved and unified control of all transport activity ensured. I therefore request Group South to appoint a senior Staff Officer, 2 representatives and a small subsidiary staff from Operations Staff, Admiral, Black Sea to this organization.

CONFIDENTIAL

-74-

3 QUALITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Only 2 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla are at present available for the defense of the inshore waters off the south coast of the Taman and Kerch Peninsulas since 2 of the Group's boats are out of action with engine and shaft trouble. In view of their importance during the present situation I have reported the present state of operational readiness of this flotilla to Group South:

- "1. 1st E-Boat Flotilla at present 2 boats, after 27 January 3 boats at operational readiness (S 26, 51, 102).
2. S 28 and S 72 are at present in Constantza for an engine overhaul. The deadline of 5 February will be greatly exceeded by S 72 since the necessary reserve shaft probably only left Kiel today. Thus, after 5 February, 4 boats will be ready.
3. S 49 is disabled at Ivan Baba with a broken shaft; she will leave for Constantza when the weather improves. The length of the dockyard period cannot be foreseen since no reserve shaft is available.
4. S 47 should be in order by 15 February and then, manned by the crew of S 49, at operational readiness.
5. When S 47 arrives at Ivan Baba, S 102 must go to Constantza for an engine overhaul because the engines are at present only good for 5 operations.

Further Information:

Request your support for the delivery of reserve shafts. At the request of 1st E-Boat Flotilla shafts were first ordered by Commander, E-boats in G 6952 Ing. dated 14 October 1942 from the docks at Kiel.

Admiral, Black Sea 506 A I."

1630-  
2400

Air raid warning at Rostov. Many bombs dropped, but no damage to naval installations.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 January, 1945

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following sighting reports:

- 0950- Ghelenjik: 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons,  
1250 5 motor minesweepers, 30 small boats.  
Tuapse: 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 5 coastal  
vessels totaling 2,500 tons, several small boats.  
Sukhum: 3 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons,  
some boats, floating dock of old design, 1 tanker  
of 7,000 tons of old design.  
Poti: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in dock,  
2 cruiser hulls, several destroyers and  
submarines.
- 1800 Radio intercept service reported 1 destroyer off  
the central east coast, presumably near Tuapse  
at 1745.

Situation report: According to radio traffic,  
only smaller vessels were active off the central  
to southern east coast. Tuapse area, 1 destroyer  
during the evening, 4 submarines, central to  
western Black Sea, 3 off the east coast.

Comments:

Only slight coastal traffic according to air  
reconnaissance. Insofar as the ports have been  
examined, a comparison with 27 January showed no  
change in the shipping in port. Since according  
to Main Naval D/F Station, radio intelligence had  
nothing special to report, it would appear that  
the enemy has no particular plans.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast: No change, NE winds, force 6.

Escort and minesweeping operations are therefore  
at a standstill and the 1st E-Boat Flotilla  
cannot operate. Ice is increasing in Kerch  
Strait and it will be impossible to resume supply  
traffic even with the icebreakers "Solombola" and  
"Kiel".

Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that  
the Army intends to set up a Corps H.Q. for the  
transport operations to and fro across Kerch  
Strait. The following will be subordinate to  
the Corps H.Q. apart from the Staff of General  
Reinhardt:

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Colonel Henke's transport group of 2 combined operations companies, 2 ferry battalions, 2 commands of assault boats and 2 unloading staffs.
2. Combined operation units on the east bank of Kerch Strait for the expansion of Taman, Senaya and Temriuk.
3. Unloading staffs on the east bank at Temriuk, Kossa Chuchka, Senaya, Taman, Kossa Tuzla and the fish-salting works.

The following crossing places have been provisionally considered for crossing Kerch Strait:

1. From Ilich to the bays west of Cape Uro and Cape Tarkhan.
2. From the middle of Kossa Chuchka to south of Cape Fornar.
3. From the southern tip of Kossa Chuchka to Yenikale.
4. From Taman to Kerch.
5. From the fish-salting works via Kossa Tuzla to Akburnu.

This plan and the employment of a Corps H.Q. shows the importance attached by the Army to transport duties - return transports, supplies - across Kerch Strait. Under the circumstances I do not consider the limited operational staff which I requested as sufficient and would therefore now demand more (see War Diary 27 January) and ask Group South for the command of a full Operations Staff. At the same time I propose the following ruling:

1. Operations Staff to be subordinated for operations to the proposed Corps H.Q. as during operation "Blücher".
2. A staff officer to be appointed to each of the loading staffs at Kerch and Taman and a junior naval officer to the remaining loading stations as liaison officer to the loading staffs.
3. All naval vessels employed on transport duties to be subordinate to the Operations Staff which will, moreover, assume full naval control of the entire operation.

CONFIDENTIAL

29 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 1825 Radio intercept service reported that at 1748 the Command Station for patrol, escort and mine vessels in Poti and Anakriya sent out a moderately long radiogram during the routine to 2 patrol vessels, 22 mine vessels and 6 M.T.B.s. Convoy activity has presumably increased off the east coast.
- 2245 2215 2 destroyers identified at sea, position unknown.

Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that nothing was identified by reconnaissance over the sea on 29 January. Lively activity of coastal vessels in both directions along the Caucasus coast. Large oil patch off Poti. At Tuapse 1 medium, 3 small freighters, 12 coastal vessels, totaling 4,500 tons, 2 minesweepers, 4 motor minesweepers, some M.T.B.s. One coastal vessel off the harbor, 3 patrol boats. Two coastal vessels, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 6 motor minesweepers, several M.T.B.s at Ghalenjik. Sukhum, Sochi, Ochenchiri unchanged.

Situation report: According to radio traffic lively activity of patrol, escort and minesweeping vessels northern to southern east coast. At midnight 2 destroyers probably off the central east coast. Six submarines intercepted at sea, 4 of them probably central to western Black Sea, 2 off the east coast.

Comments:

Air reconnaissance results and radio intelligence continued to reveal lively supply traffic off the Caucasus coast. The enemy's intentions cannot be detected from these observations.

Own Situation:

Group South informed me that Rear Admiral Scheurlen has been approached about the Operations Staff for transport duties for which I made a request. Until his arrival I have entrusted the duties to Lieutenant (s.g.) Peddersen (Commander, Sea Transportation Section, Black Sea). He will be available at Kerch after 31 January.

- 1600 Now that the damage to the clutch has been repaired E-boat S 26 is again fit for service.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1649 According to a message from U 24 she is shadowing a steamer which is passing through her operational area, course 310°, speed 10 knots. U 24 has informed U 19 which is in the adjacent operational area to the north.
- 1800 Attempts by the icebreaker "Kiel" to cut a channel from Kerch to Taman were unsuccessful. North of Cape Tuzla the icebreaker encountered thick ice which she was unable to cut through. Hence traffic across Kerch Strait cannot operate until further notice.

I have sent the following report on the present position of the Naval Shore Commanders to Group South:

1. Naval Shore Commander, Kerch visited Simferopol. He returned to Mariupol to direct the withdrawal of the remaining units.
2. Port Commander 17 today arrived at Sevastopol.
3. Port Commander 22 arrived at Ak Mechet.
4. Port Commander 24 is on the way to Skadovsk.
5. Commander Stiege's Coastal Group has arrived at Eupatoria with the Advance Detachment, Kerch.
6. Deitmer battery at Bordyansk and Kotlarski battery at Mariupol are both operating with two 7.5 cm. guns. Question of further equipping them with three 7.62 cm. guns each is in the balance.
7. Operations Command, Cramer near Tichoresk is trying to continue the march to Mariupol.
8. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will transfer to Anapskaya on 29 January (H.Q. of Artillery Commander and 10th Rumanian Infantry Division).
9. Port Commander 31 is very near Slavalskaya.
10. Port Commander 19 has evacuated Krasnodar.
11. Naval Harbor Master, Yeisk has arrived at Ufiteri.
12. Only the units of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, operating under direct shelter of the coast, remain in the Caucasus area, i.e. Port Commanders 16 and 18 at Novorossisk, Port Commander 20 at Anapa.

CONFIDENTIAL

13. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea/Ukraine has transferred the entire Command to Theodosia.
14. Commanders of the 1st and 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalions are in conference with Quartermaster General, South.
15. Admiral, Black Sea has been obliged to ask Quartermaster General, South to place transportation space at the disposal of 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion in order that it may transport the remaining units of Naval Shore Commander, Xerxes since rail transport is doubtful."

CONFIDENTIAL

-80-

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

30 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 0915 Grid square 9574, Tuapse roads, 1 merchant ship of 1,500 tons, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 1 minesweeper, 1 motor minesweeper.
- 0935 Grid square 8537, Ghelenjik, 1 merchant ship up to 1,000 tons in harbor, 1 minesweeper, 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons, 1 mine vessel, 20 boats, 1 minesweeper in the roads.

Situation report: Ghelenjik, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons, 1 minesweeper, 20 boats, 1 minesweeper stopped off the harbor. The other ports were not surveyed because of the weather. Lively traffic of coastal vessels and small freighters persists along the Caucasus coast.

Radio intercept service reported: During the afternoon 1 destroyer in the central to southern east coast. Continued activity of patrol and escort vessels in the coastal area. Three submarines central to western Black Sea, 2 submarines off the east coast.

Own Situation:

During talks, Colonel Henke, Chief of the Transport Group in the Corps H.Q. newly formed by the Army, confirmed the Army's plans as reported in War Diary 28 January. He added that when returning formations from Taman to Kerch the possibility of two particular tasks should, as a precautionary measure, be borne in mind:

1. Men and material no longer required for the occupation of the Gotenkopf, must be transferred back in an orderly manner.
2. Should the whole area east of Kerch Strait have to be evacuated, the transfer of the men would have to be rapidly organized.

In the second case every vessel must be used to remove men from every point on the eastern shore of Kerch Strait as it would no longer be possible to assemble troops at the usual places of embarkation. We must not allow our minefields

CONFIDENTIAL

-81-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

inside Kerch Strait to become an obstacle to our ferry operation. I have therefore ordered that the laying of the minefield between Kossa Tuzla and the fish-salting works be postponed until the situation becomes clearer and that top priority be given to laying minefields in the southern approach to Kerch Strait between Cape Takil and Shelyesniy Rog.

The northern section of minefield S 57 ordered to reinforce the Constantza minefields has been laid according to plan by the mine carriers "Murgescu" and "Dacia".

The icebreakers "Solombola" and "Kiel" today continued their work in Kerch Strait when "Solombola" stuck on the wreck lying in  $45^{\circ} 18.9' N, 36^{\circ} 31' E$ . The ship lies on an even keel. Bow 1 meter and stern 0.5 meters out of the water. She is watertight, her engine and rudder are in order. Efforts by naval ferry barges to tow her off have so far failed.

The minesweeping plane has now completed checking the area between Kossa Chuchka and Yenikale in preparation for the ice road to be made there should the ice situation become more acute, and for the subsequent transport route. Eleven covering runs were made but no mines swept.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

31 January, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force Staff, Crimea made the following reports:

- 0830 Grid square 94361, 15 miles northwest of Sochi, 1 destroyer.  
Grid square 94472, 5 miles west of Sochi, 1 destroyer, medium speed, northerly course.
- 0957 Grid square 04872, 12 miles west of Sukhum, 7 barges in tow totaling 7,000 tons, 2 patrol vessels and fighter cover, course northwest.
- 1000 Grid square 0487, 15 miles west of Sukhum, 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 2 patrol vessels, course northwest.
- 1545 Of the destroyers reported in the morning one put in to Tuapse, one in to Ghelenjik.  
Ghelenjik: 1 freighter of 800 tons, 7 coastal vessels, 12 small boats.  
Tuapse: 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 5 coastal vessels, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons off the harbor.  
Sochi: 3 coastal vessels, 5 boats.  
Sukhum: 2 freighters of 1,000 tons on the roads, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 1 patrol vessel, in port 1 destroyer (new construction).  
Grid square 8585, 10 miles west of Tuapse, 2 coastal vessels stopped.
- 1915 According to radio traffic, cruiser D, Commanding Admiral, Light Forces aboard an unidentified vessel, and destroyers are to be expected at sea. The vessels intercepted receiving messages are no longer in Batum.

Situation report: Further lively activity of escort and patrol vessels off the northern to southern east coast. Cruiser D, Commanding Admiral, Light Forces aboard an unidentified vessel and 2 destroyers were probably at sea in the evening in an unknown position.  
Central to western Black Sea 3 submarines, east coast 1 submarine intercepted.

Comments:

Apart from the above reports of single ships identified, Air Force Staff, Crimea reported lively activity of many coastal vessels along the Caucasus coast, course northwest. This

CONFIDENTIAL

-83-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

confirms the impression that enemy supply traffic to Tuapse and Chelenjik has of late been particularly heavy. The destroyers sighted by air reconnaissance and the formation presumed at sea by Main Naval D/F Station as a result of radio intelligence probably serve to cover the flank of supply ships proceeding off the coast.

Own Situation:

0010 Port Commander, Yalta reported that at 2215 on 30 January, west of Simeis, a surfaced submarine was sighted by boats of the Reinforced Frontier Control Service (Coastal) Patrol and fired on. The report was confirmed by Section Commander, Simeis. After the attack the boat turned away to the south. It is anticipated that the enemy will lay a minefield on or in the immediate vicinity of the German supply route.

The 2 boats (R 163, R 164) of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla lying at Yalta were therefore ordered to sweep the Yalta route via Brown 6 to Brown 4 and back with Crepeau gear and 10 meter pendant, to report any mines by "Most Immediate" radiogram and sweep the minefield detected.

1156 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the Port Commander's quarters at Novorossisk were shelled by enemy guns; 8 hits scored and 1 man slightly injured.

With the improved weather convoy traffic was resumed again. Furthermore a patrol line can be taken up again as a defense against enemy landings.

1222 I therefore issued orders for:

1. Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla to put out from Ivan Baba at 1600 and occupy a patrol line between 1900 and 0500 south of the Taman Peninsula in  $45^{\circ} 0' N$  from  $36^{\circ} 50' E$  to  $37^{\circ} 7' E$ .

Task:

- a. To report enemy forces by "Most Immediate" radiogram.
  - b. To torpedo warships from torpedoboats upwards and valuable transports.
2. Italian E-Boat Flotilla, Yalta to occupy a patrol line from 1900 to 0500 between Yalta and Cape Sarich at a distance of not more than 15 miles from the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1600 E-boats S 26 and S 51 put out from Ivan Baba for the operation according to plan.

1800 The boats put in again because the weather was deteriorating.

A minesweeping plane began to check the southern part of Kerch Strait today; so far no mines swept.

The tug "Kiel" continued icebreaking tasks off Taman. It has still been impossible to cut a channel through the ice for the supply traffic. Attempts to salvage the icebreaker "Solombola" have so far failed.

2005 Main Naval D/F Station, Cape Ili reported that the radio picture obtained in conjunction with Main Naval Station, Constantza intercepted Italian Commander, Minesweepers in air grid square 6570. The number and type of vessels was not identified.

The presence of Commander, Minesweepers would suggest a moderately large formation with the possible task of:

1. Operating against the south coast of the Taman Peninsula or the Kerch Peninsula; in view of the position reported, probably 5:00 p.m.
2. Providing a swept channel by which to approach the above-mentioned coasts with a larger force in its wake. I shall take the following measures:

1. Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will at once occupy a patrol line south of Cape Chauda.

2. Italian E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a line between Yalta and Cape Meganom.

3. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will be advised of the situation and will receive a directive regarding the necessary measures for defense.

I must do without a patrol line south of the Taman Peninsula because it will be impossible to pass south of Kerch Strait under present northeasterly weather conditions because the land there offers no protection.

2200 E-boats S 26, S 51 and 3 Italian E-boats left for the patrol lines according to plan.

(Signed) Witthoeft-Enden.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea  
16-31 January, 1943

Re page 35, 16 January:

Improving the equipment of German U-boats with technical navigational devices, in particular with a sounding set with greater depth control, is an urgent priority because of the special conditions obtaining off the eastern Black Sea coast.

Re pages 48-50, 19 January:

With reference to the transfer of units of the Naval Shore Commanders it should be noted that the Army is, in fact, responsible for the struggles for the coast. The use of naval units as an emergency unit can only be sanctioned for the necessary protection of naval installations and interests. In the present case Admiral, Black Sea's decision is approved since the naval units are not required elsewhere, and they will be able to help reinforce the coastal defenses which are at present weak.

Re page 62, 23 January and page 75, 27 January:

The heavy demands made on E-boats by frequent operations and bad weather cause constant breakdowns. The Group has therefore sent a special request for the boats to be increased by a flotilla.

Re page 68, 24 January:

Despite the well-known shortage of planes in the Air Force, the request for fighter cover must be repeated if irreplaceable shipping losses are to be avoided. Losses eventually react to the disadvantage of Army operations.

Re page 77, 28 January:

The Group did not approve the subordination of Operations Staff to Corps H.Q., instead it ordered subordination to Admiral, Black Sea.

On behalf of Naval Group Command South:

Chief of Staff.

(Signed) Brinlmann.

CONFIDENTIAL

-86-

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 FEBRUARY, 1943

PG/31525

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

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION





CONFIDENTIAL

1 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

- 0800 Coastal reconnaissance plane sighted 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers, 1 submarine standing on and off in air grid square 9465 (15 miles southwest of Sochi).
- 0900 Main Naval D/F Station Constantza reported cruiser "D" probably in the sea area central east coast.
- 1205 Main Naval D/F Station Cape Ili obtained a bearing of 115° on this cruiser.
- 1225 Air shadower reported the enemy formation, course 120° and moderate speed, in air grid square 1374, 30 miles west of Poti.
- 1400 Formation put in to Poti.
- 1200 -  
1300 Air reconnaissance sighted several escorted freighters on course 310° off the Caucasus coast between Gudant and Tuapse. Two 4,000 ton freighters, 2 of 2,000 tons, 2 of 1,000 tons and 6 of 800 tons and 6 coastal vessels were identified in Tuapse harbor.

There is 1 destroyer at Ghelenjik, in addition to the usual coastal vessels and numerous small craft.

The survey of radio intelligence shows that Main Naval D/F Station suspected a cruiser "A" off the south Caucasus coast in the afternoon and in the evening 1 destroyer in the same area proceeding northwestward out to sea.

No enemy forces were intercepted during reconnaissance of the eastern and central Black Sea despite good visibility.

Survey:

Air reconnaissance identified heavy traffic off the Caucasus coast including some fairly large steamers. Shipping in the chief supply port of Tuapse has further increased. I assume that the enemy formation intercepted today by the Main Naval D/F Station and sighted and followed by air reconnaissance until it put in to Poti, was intended as flank protection for the heavy supply traffic. Unusually heavy supply traffic and concentration of shipping at Tuapse suggest larger-scale enemy operations shortly. However, since the warship formation put in to Poti at 1400 today,

CONFIDENTIAL

-1- -87-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(87)

CONFIDENTIAL

I do not think the expected operation will be carried out in the coming night.

Own Situation:

0600 Our own and Italian E-boats returned from their reconnaissance line to their bases at Ivan Baba and Theodosia. No sighting reports.

In an earlier report Main Naval D/F Station Cape Ili claimed that Commander, Minesweepers was at sea at 2005 on 31 January in air grid square 6570, and thus occasioned special measures on my part (see War Diary 31 Jan.). A check of this report by the Head of the Radio Intercept Service who is temporarily here did not confirm the assumption.

1345 Two boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla were ordered to take up a patrol line off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula tonight.

Ivan Baba

1600 E-boat S 49 put out for Constantza for repairs (broken shaft).

1703 Motor minesweeper R 165 reported 4 mines swept during sweep of route Brown 6 to Brown 4 (see War Diary 31 Jan., 0010) from  $44^{\circ} 21.8' N$  to  $33^{\circ} 49.5' E$ . This confirms that the submarine reported by Reinforced Frontier Control Service (Coastal) had laid a minefield on her own supply route. I have closed route Brown from point 1 to 6. Motor minesweepers will continue sweeping at daybreak on 2 February.

1819 Report received from S 49 that her second engine is out of order and she is returning to Ivan Baba at a speed of 9 knots.

Harbor Defense Flotilla Sevastopol today swept the route Sevastopol - Cape Lukull. No mines swept. 12 drifting mines (4 horned mines and 8 inertia contact mines) were shot up.

Group South does not approve my suggestion that the Naval Special Transport Staff should be put under the Corps HQ formed by the Army for transport tasks from Kerch to Taman (see War Diary 28 Jan.) and has instructed that they should remain under Admiral, Black Sea both with regard to the actual execution of the transport duties at sea and the preparation and readiness of transport vessels. Admiral, Black Sea will be entirely responsible for

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(85)

transports within his area and will also direct the bringing of transports from Sevastopol and the Danube ports to the Taman Peninsula. The Naval Special Transport Staff will primarily be assigned to the Staff of General Reinhardt as a Naval Liaison Staff. The authority of Corps HQ Kerch does not extend beyond fixing priorities and quantities of supplies and personnel to be moved.

The following radiogram confirms that procedure will be in accordance with this directive and at the same time explains the reasons for my earlier suggestion:

"Re your Op.507 Gkdos:

- A. In accordance with your directive, Naval Special Transport Staff will be subordinated for operations to Admiral, Black Sea and we shall endeavor to persuade Army Group A to put all the Army vehicles used for transport duties (Transport Group Colonel Henke) under Naval Special Transport Staff.
- B. Admiral, Black Sea's proposal under Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos 523 AI was based on the following considerations:
  1. The new situation has completely altered the plans with regard to the previous Stoer program.
  2. The new transportation task primarily involves transport from Taman to Kerch, also movement of supplies in a west-easterly direction. Both tasks exclusively concern the route over the Kerch Strait.
  3. According to Army Group A there are two alternatives with regard to return transportation from Taman to Kerch:
    - a. Regular evacuation of men and material not required for occupation of Gotenkopf;
    - b. Forced evacuation of personnel if we cannot hold Gotenkopf.
  4. In the case of 3b, all available vessels down to rubber boats would be employed and embarkation would take place along the entire coast without regard for the mine situation.
  5. With reference to 3b, Army Group A must act ahead; hence the build-up of a strong organization with a High Command at its

CONFIDENTIAL

head and assembly of a large number of Army vessels.

6. We must reckon with the fact that Army Group A will probably refuse to sanction the existence of independent naval organizations within the overall set-up, at any rate the subordination of the transport group (Colonel Henke). Since unified direction is imperative, it is not impossible that, should subordination of Naval Special Transport Staff to Army Group A be refused, in the event of critical developments Army High Command may demand the subordination of Admiral, Black Sea together with the Naval Special Transport Staff to Army Group A.
  7. The position of the Chief of the Naval Special Transport Staff would probably be stronger if he were part of Corps HQ than if he remained outside.
  8. In the event of failure the Army is inclined to lay the blame on the Navy. Behavior during "Flücker" operation is a case in point. If the Naval Special Transport Staff is not subordinate to Corps HQ, a worse situation may arise.
  9. Transport duties at sea, including those from Theodosia to Anapa (which need scarcely be considered once Kerch - Tamen traffic has been resumed) fall outside the scope of this discussion and are purely naval tasks directed and controlled exclusively by Admiral, Black Sea.
- C. Request you to reconsider your decision subject to the above considerations.

Admiral Black Sea Ckdos.Chefs. 80 AI."

CONFIDENTIAL

2 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Lively shipping traffic in both directions along the Caucasus coast. Escort provided by 3 destroyers and 1 torpedoboat. Harbor reconnaissance prevented by the weather. Air Force photographic survey of Tuapse, Ghelenjik and Poti revealed nothing of importance. At Ghelenjik 5 motor minesweepers and 8 E-boats, 2 landing craft, 50 small craft, 8 freighters of 600 - 1,500 tons and 6 coastal vessels were identified. The radio picture did not reveal any movement of larger vessels.

Own Situation:

S 51 and S 102 of the 1st E-boat Flotilla occupied a reconnaissance line south of the Taman Peninsula until 0500 on the night of 1 February. No sighting reports. After midnight NE winds, force 4, sea 3, increasing.

The repeat operation scheduled for the night of 2/3 February had to be abandoned owing to the weather.

- 1150 S 49 put in to Yalta and will proceed to Sevastopol as soon as route Brown is re-opened.
- 1725 The commander of motor minesweeper R 165 reported that the area where mines were detected yesterday off the southwest tip of the Crimea, to south of route Brown and 1 mile north of it, has been swept free. No more mines were cut. Hence the minefield consisted of 4 submarine inertia contact mines (not overgrown) laid diagonally across the route 150 meters apart. Route Brown was swept from point 6 - 4, twice parallel to the coastal route and once from point 5 - 6.
- 2020 The route from Brown 1 to Brown 6 has been opened. Telephone orders have been issued to motor minesweepers R 165 and R 164 to escort S 49 from Yalta to Sevastopol early on 3 February with sweeps streaming.
- 1415 The convoy "Ardeal" put in to Sevastopol with 3 destroyers and 2 motor minesweepers.

CONFIDENTIAL

-5-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(91)

CONFIDENTIAL

3 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

1212 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported 2 cruisers in air grid square 8383 at 1035, 3 destroyers, course 300<sup>0</sup>, moderate speed (11-17 knots) with fighter cover.

At 1315 we learnt from Air Force Staff, Crimea by telephone that the air shadower had been driven off and returned to base. Two fresh planes would take off, however, to do reconnaissance in large grid squares 74/73/84/83. Since a convoy escorted by 3 Rumanian destroyers and 2 motor minesweepers was to proceed at 1300 from Sevastopol to Constantza, a "Most Immediate" radiogram was sent to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea and to Commander, Crimean Coast:

"Consider it desirable to recall Sevastopol-Constantza convoy."

Commander, Convoys and Escorts issued a relevant directive.

2000 Air reconnaissance during the afternoon had nothing to report. Low cloud and poor visibility prevented exhaustive observation. According to radio intercept reports from Main Naval D/P Station Constantza 1 cruiser and 1 destroyer were in the southeastern Black Sea. Radio traffic revealed another destroyer off the central east coast. At 1500 Main Naval D/P Station Constantza reported that the radio picture showed that a battleship might be at sea. At 1431 the destroyer reported off the central east coast transmitted a short signal to an unknown coastal radio station in the Tuapse-Ghelenjik area.

Thus considerable sections of the Russian Fleet appear to be at sea. Nothing, however, was revealed regarding their intentions. Air reconnaissance of merchant shipping also failed to yield any significant reports.

Own Situation:

In view of this situation, at 2015 increased readiness was ordered for the harbors of Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea/Ukraine and Caucasus.

2320 Port Commander, Kerch reported that light signals and tracer anti-aircraft trails had

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

been repeatedly observed at sea in a south-easterly direction, probably engagements at Anapa.

- 2325 Night reconnaissance "Staffel" reported a probable enemy landing in air grid square 7517; ships were firing.
- 2350 Port Commander, Kerch reported artillery and machine-gun fire south of the Taman Peninsula.
- 2400 Reconnaissance planes reported three ships stopped in air grid square 66853, shelling the coast.

Thus enemy landing attempts in the area of the Taman Peninsula-Novorossisk are to be expected.

Adverse weather precludes operations by the 1st E-boat Flotilla.

CONFIDENTIAL

-7-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(93)

CONFIDENTIAL

4 February, 1943

Simferopol

- 0000 Air raid on Anapa and northwestern batteries and at the same time brief ineffective shelling by four ships.
- This is evidence that the enemy intends to carry out a larger-scale operation against the German occupied coast.
- 0105 U 19 and U 24 were therefore ordered into the patrol line "Panthersprung" (see War Diary 22 Jan.).
- 0522 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported enemy attacks on Shirokaya (northwest of Novorossisk Bay).
- 0600 Main Naval D/F Station Constantza intercepted 2 destroyers, 2 torpedoboats and 2 patrol vessels off the northeast coast.
- 0700 Long-range reconnaissance plane on landing in air grid square 14541 reported six 1,000 ton freighters, 8 minesweepers, 2 destroyers about 8 kilometers off the coast. A destroyer shelled Shirokaya - Balka. Three landing craft and 1 burning minesweeper off the coast near Osiereika. 16 motor minesweepers and E-boats in Kabardinka Bay shelling the cement factory.
- 0745 Air Force Staff, Crimea confirmed enemy landings near Novorossisk last night.
- 0811 Air reconnaissance sighted an enemy formation in air grid square 85371 heading for Ghelenjik harbor.
- 0945 I gave Group South and all the Naval and Army Commands concerned a situation report based on information received so far.
- 1000 By watching the radio traffic, Main Naval D/F Station Constantza identified 5 destroyers, 2 torpedoboats and patrol vessels off the northeast coast and in the sea area Novorossisk-Ghelenjik.
- 1142 I received definite information from Air Force Staff, Crimea that 300 men and light tanks had landed in air grid square 7545 (south of Novorossisk). Harbor reconnaissance flown during the morning identified 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers (one of them in the floating

CONFIDENTIAL

-8-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(94)



CONFIDENTIAL

dock) and 2 destroyers in Poti. No warships were identified at Batum. Thus only part of the Russian Fleet is being used to protect the landing operation.

1307 Report received from Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus that the enemy landed two tank battalions near Osiereika and south of Novorossisk; single craft landed more troops near Sudchikaya. Countermeasures in progress. Attempts of weak forces to land in Novorossisk harbor driven off.

Further landing attempts, bringing up of reinforcements to earlier landing sites and support of Russian land operations by gunfire from cruisers and destroyers at sea must be expected in the coming night. The patrol lines ("Panthersprung") assigned to U 24 and U 19 are too far north to be an effective defense. I have therefore decided to station the boats as close to the coastal landing site as possible and they have been ordered to take up a patrol line from air grid square 3539 (lower edge center) to air grid square 7547 (lower right-hand corner).

1333

1335 Radio reconnaissance identified 1 destroyer in the sea area between Adler and Gudant.

Air reconnaissance, taken together with the radio picture, reveals that the following ships of the Russian Fleet are at sea: the heavy cruiser "Krasny Kawkas", the light cruiser "Krasny Krim", the large destroyer "Charkov", 5 destroyers and 2 torpedoboats. The cruiser formation sighted in air grid square 8383 on 3 February was not again intercepted today but, according to photographic survey, is still at sea.

I have therefore ordered harbor defenses to remain at increased readiness; the ban on convoys also still holds good.

1530 Port Commander, Novorossisk's situation report stated that the harbor was under continual artillery fire. An enemy ship is lying damaged and deserted on the shore near cement factory 2. Three of the Port Commander's platoons were made available to the division for sealing off the southern quarter of the town.

2100 Radio intercept service reported that the destroyer reported at 1335 off Gudant by the D/F Station Constantza was in the area west of Poti and would therefore seem to be returning there.

CONFIDENTIAL

2222 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that the enemy had made a fresh landing to the right of air grid square 75424.

"Solombola" today capsized owing to drift ice: crew left the ship. Further attempts at salvage with the available resources out of the question. As a result of persistent northeasterly winds Kerch Strait south of Pavlovski is ice-free. North of Tuzla there is fast ice; this prevents resumption of supply traffic to Taman or the fish-salting works via the normal mine-free route.

I have therefore decided to have a mine-free route cleared as soon as possible south of Kossa Tuzla, so as to enable the fish-salting works to be reached from Kerch or Kamish-Burun via an open fairway.

The Commander, Danube Flotilla has instructions that on 5 February he is to use the ice-breaker "Kiel" and also explosive charges to free the FZ-groups at present ice-bound in Pavlovski harbor, and send them to sweep a clear route.

During an air raid the new mooring jetty at Taman was badly damaged by direct hits.

U 9 reported that she would put in to Theodosia at 1000 on 5 February to refuel.

During the course of the day there was lively enemy air activity in the area Kerch-Kamish-Burun (planes flew over in six waves dropping five bombs); there were also several reconnaissance planes over Theodosia-Yalta-Balaklava.

CONFIDENTIAL

-10-

CONFIDENTIAL

(96)

CONFIDENTIAL

5 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Adverse weather prevented air reconnaissance except off the east coast as far as Tuapse. Some coastal and patrol vessels, also two submarines, in the sea area Novorossisk. Shipping in Tuapse harbor normal.

The destroyer reported yesterday evening off Poti heading for the northwest was, according to radio intercept report at 1530, in the sea area west of Adler-Sochi. At 1906 two further destroyers were intercepted by the Main Naval D/F Station off the central to northern east coast. These destroyers were receiving messages from Novorossisk. In addition, some small vessels were intercepted and 1 submarine between the central and western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0230 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported that at dusk on 4 February the enemy brought reinforcements to the bridgehead south of Novorossisk. Fighting still continues at both landing sites. Three tanks and a number of craft were shot up. The enemy forces which have landed are cut off at the bridgeheads.

0758 Air Force Staff, Crimea reported that morning air reconnaissance cannot be flown owing to the danger of icing and that the unfavorable weather seems likely to persist. Thus the position of the Russian cruiser formation will again remain undetected today.

1011 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported on the situation there:

"Situation until dusk:

Southern part of the city shelled and bombed. Supplies dropped to the recently landed troops. Heavy bombardment of the supply routes to Novorossisk lasted until about 1800. Almost quiet at night. At 0555 German guns fired at some eight vessels with small craft in Kabardinka Bay; type of vessel not identifiable. When fired at, the small craft made off out to sea. At approximately 0700, five small craft were at sea on a level with Ghelenjik. Situation in the southern infantry sector unchanged. After 0630, slight enemy gunfire against the southern quarter of the city."

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

1030 According to the weather forecast from the Simferopol meteorological station, SE winds, force 6-7 will continue. Operations of the 1st E-boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats are therefore not possible tonight.

Organization of Theodosia as an Italian E-boat base is now complete.

1100 Italian E-boat Flotilla was ordered to transfer 4 boats to Theodosia on 6 February.

Owing to a sudden change in the weather, the ice situation in Kerch Strait during the day improved. The northern section is partly ice-free so that transports from Kolonka mole, where 4 loaded naval ferry barges are now anchored, to Kossa Chuchka can perhaps be resumed on 6 February. The necessary preparations are being made.

To Naval High Command, Operations Division and Group South:

- "1. Possibilities of transport across Kerch Strait out of the question latterly due to ice. Since 4 February the prevailing thaw together with southerly winds has improved the ice situation in the northern part. Plans for 6 February: Naval ferry barges and combined operations landing craft will attempt to cross from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka. Success doubtful because of fresh drop in temperature.
2. Preparations by Admiral, Black Sea for transportation of supplies from Theodosia to Anapa now complete. Naval ferry barges in readiness at Theodosia. Army Group A expressly desire that traffic should only proceed in extreme emergency in order to avoid loss of barges from enemy action on this exposed route.

Admiral Black Sea Gkdos. 700 AI."

The change in the weather and blasting of the ice have succeeded in freeing the FZ vessels from Pavlovski harbor. Minesweeping of the route from Kamish Burun to the fish-salting works will begin on 6 February, weather permitting. Check-sweep of the eastern section of the route, not laid with German non-contact mines, will be made by minesweeping planes.

Since the enemy formation reported on 3 February is probably still at sea, I have not

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

withdrawn the ban on steamer convoys from Constantza to Sevastopol. If the enemy's object was an operation against German supply traffic in the western Black Sea, it seems unlikely that he will still be in this area on 6 February (radius of action of destroyers).

1950 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was therefore directed to allow convoys to proceed on 6 February at his discretion after receipt of results of the morning's air reconnaissance.

2400 No reports have been received from U 19 and U 24 which still occupy a reconnaissance line south of Novorossisk..

CONFIDENTIAL

-13-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(99)

CONFIDENTIAL

6 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air Force reconnaissance off the northeast coast was again rendered difficult by the weather. Nothing was sighted in the central and eastern Black Sea area (visibility 20-30 kilometers). One destroyer was sighted at midday on a northwesterly course in the sea area Ghelenjik; she probably put in to Ghelenjik at 1210. Shipping in Ghelenjik comprised about 6,000 tons of merchant shipping, 1 destroyer, 6 motor minesweepers, 6 E-boats, some coastal vessels and several small craft. A smaller convoy on northwesterly course was intercepted in the sea area Tuapse. At 2215 Main Naval D/F Station reported that, according to radio traffic, there were 2 destroyers in the central to northern part of the Black Sea. According to radio intercept report, apart from some small craft the radio picture revealed no shipping movements on the entire east coast. Five submarines were identified in the central and western Black Sea, 2 off the east coast and 1 whose position was unknown.

Own Situation:

- 0740 After refuel, U 9 left Theodosia for the patrol line "Panthersprung" (see War Diary 22 January).
- 0906 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported an enemy motor vessel at 0520 on a zigzag course making for Kabardinka Bay. Enemy attacks on the southern infantry sector. The enemy penetrated to a depth of approximately 50 meters and is pushing in a northerly direction.
- 1030 According to today's weather forecast, a southeast wind, force 6, will continue off the north Caucasus coast. Intended operations of the 1st E-boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats must therefore be abandoned.
- The Net Barrage Group, Black Sea was ordered first to lay the anti-torpedo net at the Sevastopol coaling wharf and then to lay a double anti-torpedo net to protect the steamer berths at Theodosia against aerial torpedoes.
- 1112 According to a report from the Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, the situation on the

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

southern front at Novorossisk is regarded with confidence. The enemy did not receive any supplies during the night. The enemy bridgehead at Osieroika will shortly be mopped up.

- 1115 Information from Port Commander, Kerch stated that the ice situation in Taman Bay had deteriorated as a result of a westerly wind. Use of the icebreaker "Kiel" offered little prospect of success. Kerch was ice-free outside the moles and the northern section of Kerch Strait. Traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka was resumed by 2 combined operations craft. Four combined operations craft proceeded this afternoon from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka. Chief, Sea Transportation Section was also ordered to come over to Kossa Chuchka with the loaded naval ferry barges from Kolonka mole crossing under the command of Commander 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.
- 1230 After removal of the ban on convoys, "Ardeal" left Sevastopol with 3 destroyers.
- 1330 "Tissa" and "Albaro", escorted by 3 motor minesweepers, came from Sevastopol to Constantza.
- 1615 Commander 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla who was escorting the steamers "Tissa" and "Albaro" from Sevastopol to Constantza with 3 vessels, reported a mine warning 3 miles south of Green 41 (on the route from Sevastopol to Eupatoria); one mine cut.
- I have closed route Green from point 40 to 42 on account of suspected mines and have ordered motor minesweepers R 165 and R 164 to search and, if necessary, sweep the minefield on 7 February.
- 1730 Chief, Sea Transportation Section reported that the snow storm prevented naval ferry barges from putting out from Kolonka for Kossa Chuchka. The four combined operations boats which left for Kossa Chuchka could not start on their return passage because of adverse weather.
- Since air reconnaissance of ice conditions discovered ice-free water north of Kossa Tuzla, on 7 February I shall dispatch four naval ferry barges from Kerch to the mooring jetty at the fish-salting works. The icebreaker "Kiel" will assist.
- Adverse weather today compelled the FZ groups to stop the minesweeping begun on the route from Kamish Burun to the fish-salting works.
- Today four Italian E-boats were transferred

CONFIDENTIAL

-15-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(101)

CONFIDENTIAL

from Yalta to the new base at Theodosia. This enables me, weather permitting, to use them to occupy the patrol line off the south coast of the Taman and Kerch Peninsula and employ the 1st E-boat Flotilla for offensive tasks off the Caucasus coast.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 153 have swept route Brown from Sevastopol to Yalta with cutting kite sweep, 10 meter pendant wires. No mines swept up.

After blasting dock installations and scuttling vessels, the remainder of the Rostov Command (22 men) arrived at Taganrog today.

2240 Rader based on Cape Aitodor reported a unit in 167° at a distance of 7 kilometers, obviously a submarine.

2330 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 put out.

Yalta

2340 Anti-submarine chase by an Italian E-boat.

2342 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported that fighting near Osiercika was mostly over and that, after encountering stiff opposition, forces were closing in on the enemy group south of Novorossisk. 5th Army Command is expecting further landings.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

7 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

There was no reconnaissance at sea on 7 February since the planes were used as close cover for German convoys. Strip flights were made as far as the Turkish coast; no sighting reports. Lively convoy activity in the coastal area between Tuapse and Ghelenjik, mainly in northwesterly direction. Air reconnaissance discovered that there were no coastal vessels or craft lying in Kabardinka Bay. In Ghelenjik there were about 6,500 tons of merchant shipping, 30 small craft, several E-boats and minesweepers. Shipping in Tuapse comprised about 11,000 tons of merchant shipping, 20 small craft and 1 destroyer entering port. At 0815 two destroyers were identified about 20 miles southeast of Tuapse, course 130°, high speed. These are probably the destroyers intercepted yesterday at 2215. South of Tuapse to Batum, no shipping identified. Position of the cruisers "Krasny Kawkas", "Krasny Krim" and the training ship "Komintern" still not identified. In the afternoon D/F Station located two destroyers off the central to southern east coast; on the morning of 8 February another destroyer off the northern section of that coast. Lively activity of minesweeping vessels and E-boats over the whole coastal area, also appearance of patrol vessels. Four submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea, two off the east coast.

Own Situation:

- 0800 Improved ice situation north of Kossa Tuzla permitted five naval ferry barges to put out from Kerch for the fish-salting works. They will return to Kerch with troops this afternoon and will be re-loaded overnight for fresh operations on 8 February.
- 1023 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the Osierika bridgehead has been mopped up; there were 150 prisoners and approximately 300 killed; 10 tanks were destroyed on land and 10 in the water. Between 30 and 40 Anglo-American landing craft, some of them undamaged, are lying on the shore. Fighting continues at the bridgehead south of Novorossisk.
- 1030 According to the forecast, the weather should quieten down with easterly winds, force 2-3, during the coming night. Last night the enemy sent more reinforcements to the bridgehead south

CONFIDENTIAL

-17-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(103)

CONFIDENTIAL

of Novorossisk either from Ghelenjik or from Kabardinka Bay. I have therefore decided to send the 1st E-boat Flotilla on operations against supply traffic immediately off the coast between Ghelenjik and Cape Doob, i.e., between the Russian minofields in this area - repeatedly reported in agents' messages - and the coast.

1st E-boat Flotilla was ordered:

"Situation: Russians landed on 4 February near Cape Myshako. During the past two or three nights troop transports have brought reinforcements to the bridgehead there by sea. Kabardinka Bay and Ghelenjik are the most likely ports of embarkation.

Orders:

1. At 1500 three boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla will put out from Ivan Baba for operations against enemy supply traffic off the coast between Ghelenjik Bay and Cape Doob on the night of 7/8 February.
2. Permission granted to torpedo any valuable target.
3. The boats will leave the operational area at 0300 on 8 February and put in to Ivan Baba towards 0800.
4. German U-boats will occupy the patrol line south of Kerch Strait and south of Novorossisk. Also there is the possibility of meeting German U-boats during the outward and homeward passage. Anti-submarine operations are therefore forbidden.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos 712 AI."

To protect the south coast of the Taman Peninsula against enemy landings, Italian E-boat Flotilla has been ordered to occupy a patrol line west of Cape Utrish:

"Situation: Enemy landed south of Novorossisk on the night of 3/4 February. Further landings to be expected off the south coast of the Taman Peninsula.

Orders:

1. Three boats of the Italian E-boat Flotilla will leave Theodosia at 1700 on 7 February and from 2000 will occupy a patrol line west from Cape Utrish. Length of patrol line 12 miles.

CONFIDENTIAL

-18-

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

(104)

CONFIDENTIAL

2. Task:
  - a. Should enemy forces be encountered, send radiogram; ensure very rapid transmission to Admiral, Black Sea.
  - b. Torpedo all valuable targets.
3. Boats will leave the patrol line at 0400 and enter Theodosia.
4. German U-boats will be in the sea area south of Kerch Strait and south of Cape Utrish. Expect to meet German U-boats on the outward and homeward passage. Anti-submarine operations are therefore forbidden.

Admiral, Black Sea 711 AI."

- 1300 Another naval ferry barge put out from Kerch with supplies for Taman.
- 2000 R 165 and R 163 put in to Sevastopol after sweeping the route between Green 40 and 42. No mines swept. In view of the importance of this route (the supply route from Sevastopol to Constantza) I have given orders for it to be swept again on 8 February twice in each direction with cutting kite sweep, 15 meter pendant wires.
- 2307 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported a fresh enemy landing south of Novorossisk. The 1st E-boat Flotilla which is at sea will be informed by radiogram.
- FZ group today began minesweeping of the route Kamish Burun and fish-salting works with two covering runs. No mines swept. Lively enemy air activity during the day, particularly in the area Kerch-Taman. Planes attacked eleven times in all, dropping 51 bombs; damage was only slight.
- No reports received from U 24 and U 19 (in the patrol line south of Novorossisk) and U 9 (in patrol line "Panthersprung"). U 24 leaves the line today to refuel at Theodosia.
- 2330 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported that the enemy is reinforcing his bridgehead south of Novorossisk. I have informed the E-boats at sea.

CONFIDENTIAL

8 February, 1943

Simferopol

0800 Command taken over from Vice-Admiral Witthoeft-Emden by Rear-Admiral Kieseritzky.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the central to western Black Sea and the inshore waters off the Crimean coast yielded no result. Only slight convoy and patrol activity between Novorossisk and Tuapse. According to harbor reconnaissance, shipping in Ghelenjik and Tuapse normal. The battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna", 2 heavy cruisers, 2 destroyers, 2 cruiser hulls, 12,500 tons of harbor defense and 7,000 tons of tanker space and 8 submarines were observed at Poti.

At 0445 Main Naval D/F Station reported 1 destroyer coming from the southeast in the sea area off the northern part of the coast. According to radio traffic there was 1 destroyer off the central east coast during the evening and also lively patrol activity in that area.

Own Situation:

Ivan Baba

0833 1st E-boat Flotilla put in from night operations. From 2000 until 0048 the boats lay in wait northwest of Cape Doob. No supply traffic was observed between Ghelenjik or Kabardinka Bay and the enemy bridgehead, although visibility was good. Re my radiogram concerning fresh enemy landings (see War Diary 7 February, 2330) the E-boats operated from 0048 between Cape Mysheko and Cape Sudchuk. E-boat S 102 scored a direct hit with a torpedo and sank a coastal vessel of about 250 tons off the coast southeast of Cape Sudchuk. No other vessels were sighted.

From observation last night, Commander 1st E-boat Flotilla thinks that the enemy is crossing with small craft either from Kabardinka Bay or from positions to the north of it to places of disembarkation north of Cape Sudchuk. This traffic of small craft within Novorossisk Bay cannot be intercepted by our E-boats, since the position of the mines (the previous Russian

CONFIDENTIAL

-20-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(106)

CONFIDENTIAL

mine-free approach channel runs immediately off the enemy-occupied east coast) and gunfire from German and Russian batteries make it impossible for them to enter the bay.

0900- Italian E-boats put in singly from the patrol  
1300 line west of Cape Utrish. Despite adverse weather, they remained in the patrol line until 0400 but sighted nothing. No. 568 touched bottom near Cape Chauda on her return passage. She sprang a leak and is out of action.

Temperatures at sea during the night were also below zero, so that the boats iced up badly and could not use their armament. The operation has again proved that only very limited use can be made of Italian E-boats in the Black Sea during the winter months. If temperatures are below zero, torpedo operations are no longer possible since the torpedoes lie on the open deck (no tubes) and therefore ice up.

1215 Four boats of the 1st E-boat Flotilla were ordered to repeat last night's operation.

1312 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported renewed heavy attacks on Novorossisk; own positions not endangered. At night heavy explosions were observed at sea, probably S 102's torpedo hit.

Theodosia

1330 U 24 put in from an operation for refuel. From 21 January until 4 February she was in the attack area between Sochi and Adler. Both on 30 and 31 January her torpedoes missed a netlayer of 500 tons (torpedoes were surface runners) and a tanker of 1,500 GRT. One or 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers were sighted. There was no opportunity of firing because range was too great. Air reconnaissance in the operational area considerable. On 4 February she proceeded to position "Panthersprung", sighted two destroyer formations but had no opportunity to attack. She was in the patrol line south of Novorossisk from 4 to 7 February but sighted nothing.

On 9 February, after refuel, U 24 will leave temporarily for "Panthersprung".

1658 Port Commander, Novorossisk submitted the following situation report (extract):

"By contrast with the night, intermittent enemy air activity, fairly long intervals

CONFIDENTIAL

between raids. Planes bombed and gunned the town, harbor and southern infantry sector. Buildings were damaged and the ordnance depot of Port Commander 18 received a direct hit, damaging stores. There was slight gunfire from both sides. At 1100 the enemy made a small breach in the direction of the Russian cemetery but it was sealed off at approximately 1300. At 1330 German forces counter-attacked."

1708 Motor minesweeper R 165 reported 14 mines swept during check-sweep between Sevastopol and Eupatoria.

Motor minesweepers were ordered to take up sweeping again at daybreak on 9 February. My order for closing the route still holds.

163 soldiers, 900 tons of supplies and 1 vehicle were sent today from Kerch to the fish-salting works. 1,400 soldiers and 12 vehicles were transported by return from the fish-salting works to Kerch. Supplies are at present kept down by the small capacity of the mooring jetty at the fish-salting works and the limited transport facilities from there to the east. In view of the cargo space available, considerable increase of supplies should be possible. In order to raise the number of troops brought back from Kerch - which Army Group A has designated a priority - I intend to use extra naval ferry barges which will proceed empty from Kerch to the fish-salting works and, if necessary, embark troops there with the help of auxiliary supply boats. I have informed Army Group A and the Army Commands concerned of this and requested:

1. Rapid extension of the mooring jetties at the fish-salting works.
2. Bringing up of sufficient troops to make full use of the capacity of the naval ferry barges on their return passage. (The ferry barges returning to Kerch today were not filled to capacity because insufficient troops had been got ready to embark.)

1800 Commander 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to transfer five naval ferry barges from Theodosia to Kerch on 9 February for the scheduled return transportation.

CONFIDENTIAL

-22-

CONFIDENTIAL

(108)

CONFIDENTIAL

1830- The air base southeast of Solenoye Lake  
1950 (18 kilometers southeast of Taman) observed lights and large flares and heard the roar of guns at sea. The report suggests an operation against Anapa or the neighboring coast. I have not any forces at my disposal for operations in that area since the Italian E-boats, with one exception, are out of action.

1950 5th Army Command called up and reported that the enemy was screening the coast between Myschako and Cape Sudchuk with smoke. The Command suspects plans to land under cover of the smoke and requests support from the 1st E-boat Flotilla. 1st E-boat Flotilla has been advised by radiogram.

The vessels of the FZ-group which today continued to sweep the route south of Kossa Tuzla are, all but two, out of action due to damage caused by ice and engine failure. In view of the urgency of the task I have ordered transfer of Naval Ferry Barge No. 126 - equipped with towed loop gear - from Theodosia to Kerch and equipment of another ferry barge with remote sweeping gear. Both are to be under the Commander, Danube Flotilla. I am quite aware that, despite their degaussing equipment, the use of these vessels in shallow water where ground mines are suspected is a dangerous procedure. However, owing to the importance and urgency of the task, I have decided to take the risk.

2037 I ordered Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to secure for the Navy any undamaged enemy landing craft lying near the Osicreika bridge-head - now mopped up - and investigate possibility of transferring them to Theodosia via Anapa with personnel available on the spot. Repeated bombing attacks on Taman during the day; a total of 33 bombs dropped, hits scored on the new mooring jetty, otherwise no damage.

CONFIDENTIAL

9 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Today's early morning reconnaissance did not discover any enemy shipping from the southern approach of Kerch Strait to Novorossisk and in Kabardinka Bay. Five miles south of Ghelenjik, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons escorted by 2 motor minesweepers was sighted and 15 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, 1 escorted merchant vessel of about 3,000 tons. Shipping identified at Ghelenjik comprised 2 merchant ships, each of 2,000 tons, 1 of 1,500 tons, 2 of 800 tons, 4 coastal vessels and approximately 30 other craft. Photographic reconnaissance of all the bases on the Caucasus coast revealed the enemy formation not sighted since 5 February ("Krasny Kawkas", "Krasny Krim", "Charkov") in Batum. The battleship, 2 heavy cruisers of the "Kirov" class, another cruiser in dock, 4 destroyers and several submarines and M.T.B.s were lying at Poti. Air reconnaissance sighted a total of 9 destroyers during the day as against only 7 at the end of 1942. One of the destroyers in Batum had a funnel similar to that of the "Cnewny" class and a broad stern.

From radio traffic main Naval D/F Station Constantza identified 1 destroyer off the central and 1 off the southeast coast on the night of 9 February. Furthermore, cruiser "D" was probably at sea in the Batum area. Enemy radio traffic suggested lively activity of patrol and escort vessels off the entire east coast.

Own Situation:

- 0400 Port Commander Kostov transferred to Mariupol.
- 0700 U 24 left Theodosia to occupy the patrol line "Panthersprung".
- 0745 1st E-boat Flotilla put in to Theodosia from operations. Four boats lay in wait off Cape Doop from 2050 the previous night. Visibility was moderate at first and then good, but no traffic observed. One coastal vessel and 2 M.T.B.s proceeding southeast were sighted coming from Kabardinka Bay. The coast between Myshako and Sudchuk on

CONFIDENTIAL

-24-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(110)



CONFIDENTIAL

8 February was shrouded in a natural mist. 5th Army Command's information regarding operations of enemy smoke-screen planes was probably mis-observation. I have ordered the 1st E-boat Flotilla to rest during the coming night since on each of the last two days they have been operating in unfavorable weather from 1500 until 0800.

0750 Bombing attack on Yalta. The bombs fell into the water outside the harbor and did no damage.

Novorossisk

0852 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight gunfire with heavy fighting at the site of the break-through at the bridgehead. At 0530 six enemy M.T.B.s attempted a landing but were forced back by gunfire.

0917 An enemy plane dropped a torpedo from an altitude of 150 meters southwest of the pier-head at Yalta. The torpedo, which sank after a short run, was apparently aimed at the wreck of the lighter "Saone" lying at the harbor approach.

Lack of anti-aircraft defenses is always making itself felt at Yalta. After receiving reinforcements the Command of the 9th Anti-Aircraft Division intends to transfer two heavy batteries there.

1205 A message received from Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported that the enemy again brought up reinforcements to the bridgehead overnight. The enemy is attacking to the south and fighting continues.

1252 U 19 reported that she would return to Theodosia from the operational area on 10 February. She should arrive there provisionally on the morning of 11 February and, after refuelling, put out early on 12 February for further operations lasting 5-6 days.

1652 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported losses sustained since 1 February 1943 in fighting against the enemy landing forces and from bombardment of the harbor as 15 killed, 38 wounded.

Favorable ice conditions permitted traffic to cross from Kerch to the fish-salting works today. 444 tons of military supplies, 27 vehicles and 124 soldiers were loaded on to 3 naval ferry barges and 7 Siebel ferries. Better conditions for disembarkation at the

CONFIDENTIAL

fish-salting works and quicker transport to the east would assist available shipping to achieve larger transshipments. I have again indicated this to Army Group A and the local Army Offices responsible. 1,020 soldiers, 183 prisoners of war and 30 vehicles were transported by return from the fish-salting works. This did not use the vessels employed to full capacity. I shall again point out this fact to Army Group A and urgently request attention to the matter of bringing up sufficient men for return transportation. Remote minesweeping south of Kossa Tuzla has been at a standstill today due to disablement of the FZ vessels.

Naval ferry barge No. 126, equipped with towed loop gear, was brought from Theodosia to Kerch. Since, in addition, naval ferry barge No. 472 is soon to be equipped with towed loop gear, we shall have two ferry barges with remote minesweeping gear available in Kerch Strait as from 12 February, so that urgent minesweeping can be done even during adverse weather.

A minesweeping plane today completed check-sweep of the sea area between Cape Panagiya and Cape Takil as a preliminary for the intended mining of the southern part of Kerch Strait; no mines swept.

Motor minesweepers R 165, R 163 have concluded minesweeping of route Green between Sevastopol and Eupatoria. The route was swept for one mile to the west. A total of 22 overgrown mines of type M 12 were swept. Depth setting, accurately measured, was 6-7 meters. What purpose such a minefield was intended to serve is not clear since, apart from a few steamers in the Black Sea, there are no German vessels with such a deep draft.

After 10 February, the steamer convoy (Oituz, Baibal) proceeding from Constantza, destination Sevastopol, is to put in by way of the swept route.

As a precaution, I have ordered minesweeping escort by R 165, R 163 on 10 February from Green 41 to Green 42.

Neither success nor sighting reports have been received so far from the U-boats standing in the patrol line south of Novorossisk and

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

in "Panthersprung". The reason probably is that when bringing up reinforcements for the bridgehead south of Novorossisk from Ghelenjik or Kabardinka Bay, the enemy hugs the coast, using the Russian minefield there as protection. Thus, from their present positions, U-boats are unable to intercept this traffic. According to air reconnaissance reports, Ghelenjik may definitely be regarded as the chief supply port for the Novorossisk front. Latterly, traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik and southeast of Tuapse has been particularly lively. As the situation is at present, I regard it as vital that this supply traffic, sometimes carried out by large steamers, should be attacked in order to relieve the Army. This requires transfer of U-boats; I have therefore decided to order them to the following positions:

1. U 9 just off the coast between Ghelenjik and Tuapse;
2. U 24 just off the coast between Adler and Cape Pitsunda;
3. U 19, after refuel in Theodosia, to the former patrol line south of Novorossisk on 12 February.

CONFIDENTIAL

10 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

According to morning air reconnaissance, coastal waters between Kerch Strait and Novorossisk were free of enemy vessels. Air reconnaissance of the southeastern Black Sea and the Crimean sea area likewise revealed no enemy forces. Shipping was normal off the east coast between Novorossisk and Sochi.

1315 A reconnaissance plane 20 miles west of Ghelenjik sighted 1 destroyer, course 300°, and 1 merchant ship of about 1,000 tons escorted by 2 patrol vessels, course 120°. Shipping at Ghelenjik was reported to total 8,500 tons, at Tuapse 8,000 tons. 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons entering Tuapse.

0800 Fifteen or twenty miles southwest of Ochemchiri, 1 escorted merchant ship of 4,000 tons, course southeast, 1 tanker of 5,000 tons with 2 patrol vessels, course northwest, were observed.

During observation of radio traffic, Main Naval D/F Station Constantza intercepted 2 destroyers, 1 torpedoboat and some small craft off the central to northern east coast during the afternoon. Radio traffic also revealed a third destroyer, probably in the southeastern Black Sea, position unknown. The station also intercepted five submarines in the central to western Black Sea, 1 submarine off the east coast.

Novorossisk

Own Situation:

0600 Port Commander, Novorossisk in his situation report stated that our own guns had set fire to a moderately large vessel, probably a coastal vessel or freighter, between the cement factory and Kabardinka Bay. On 9 February craft sighted during the day heading for the landing site were forced to retire by our gunfire. The enemy continues to exert pressure on German positions without result.

0800 Strong northeasterly winds and a fall in temperature have caused the ice situation in Kerch Strait to deteriorate again. The

CONFIDENTIAL

-28-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(114)

CONFIDENTIAL

one landing stage on the east bank (fish-salting works) to remain ice-free so far, is now blocked by heavy drift ice and ice barriers north of Kossa Tuzla. Five naval ferry barges and 3 combined operations ferries which put out this morning had to return.

I had planned to maintain supply traffic by using the route south of Kossa Tuzla and accepting the still existent danger of mines (the western section of the route has only been twice swept by FZ vessels). However, since ice reconnaissance by plane has revealed that the passage between Kossa Tuzla and Cape Tuzla is ice-bound and the southern approach to the fish-salting works also closed, the plan must now be dropped.

Of the boats which crossed with supplies from Kerch on 9 February, 2 naval ferry barges and 4 combined operations ferries which could not be unloaded on that date are frozen in near the fish-salting works.

1000 Mincsweeping south of Kossa Tuzla again could not be resumed since the heavy sea made use of gear impossible. After a vain attempt, the vessels put in at 1000.

1030 The forecast by meteorological station Simferopol for the night of 10/11 February for the area between Yalta and Novorossisk reads: E wind, force 5-6, some rain, temperature 5-10<sup>o</sup> below zero. Thus our own and Italian E-boat operations for the coming night must again be canceled.

Lively enemy air activity during the day: air raid warnings in Taman/Kerch/Theodosia, Yalta.

1230 Seven bombs dropped.

1311 Nine bombs in the Yalta harbor area; no naval damage.

Taman From 0915 to 1215, continuous bombing attack on Taman harbor. Direct hits on the road to the harbor, otherwise no damage.

1500 5th Army Command reported that the enemy has occupied Myshako base. This enables him to land near and east of Myshako without interference since we can no longer observe or fire on this strip of coast. Laying of minefield immediately parallel to the coast and east of Myshako would afford a certain protection, at least temporarily effective, against landings. I intend therefore, as soon as possible, to lay a UMB minefield off Myshako with the only mine-carriers available for

CONFIDENTIAL

the task, namely four boats of the 1st E-boat Flotilla. Preparations are being expedited so that minelaying may take place provisionally on the night of 11/12 February should the weather be favorable.

1624 According to Port Commander, Novorossisk, starting at 1015 four of his platoons withdrew from the harbor area at the Army's directive for operations on the western fringe of the southern quarter of the city, since the enemy had broken out of the bridgehead northward on hill 307.

Checksweep of the eastern section of the route south of Kossa Tuzla was made by mine-sweeping plane but no mines were swept. The operation will be repeated on 11 February.

1900 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 were ordered to sweep route Brown from Sevastopol to Yalta with kite cutting sweep, 10 meter long pendant wires.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the landing craft which we secured undamaged off Osidreika had been destroyed since their recapture by the enemy was threatened. (See War Diary 8 Feb.).

1915 The following teletype was received from Naval Staff, Operations Division, signed by Commander in Chief, Navy:

"There is heavy fighting on our eastern front. Every naval success, however small, is of importance. A supreme effort is needed to aid our comrades on the land front. Do not miss any opportunity of getting at the enemy.

Commander in Chief, Navy."

I am passing on this directive word for word to all subordinate units. For me it means that prospect of success is the criterion when deciding on operations. Previously the small number of available forces compelled me to pay attention to possible losses, but now that factor can be disregarded so long as full commitment promises success.

CONFIDENTIAL

11 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No reconnaissance results in the central and southeastern Black Sea. Poti and Batum could not be observed on account of adverse weather. Shipping in Ghelenjik has decreased to about 4,000 tons of harbor defense tonnage and 40 small craft. Tuapse is unchanged at about 8,000 tons of merchant shipping. During the morning, reconnaissance planes intercepted 1 destroyer on a southeasterly course in the sea area Sochi, 1 freighter, 4 motor minesweepers on a southeasterly course near Gagri, a 7,000 ton tanker and 2 patrol vessels northwest of Sukhum.

Main Naval D/F Station reported 1 destroyer at 1420 in the sea area off Anakriya, another destroyer at 1625 off Tuapse. A third destroyer was located during the afternoon off the southern part of the east coast. 1 submarine central to western Black Sea, 1 off the east coast and 3 in unknown position at sea.

Own Situation:

- 0745 The ice situation between Kerch and Taman has again become more acute owing to night frost. North of Kerch Strait only drift ice and off Kossa Tuzla marginal ice. Traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Tuzla is therefore still possible. Port Commander Kerch has been directed to endeavor to send the naval ferry barges lying loaded in Kolonka by this route.
- 0830 Ice reconnaissance by Storch plane confirmed that the landing stage at the fish-salting works cannot be reached from either north or south of Kossa Tuzla. South of Cape Tuzla clear water was observed but there are no landing or transport facilities there for supplies. On the other hand, by using auxiliary supply boats it might be possible to transport troops from there to the west bank. Since the beaches south of Cape Tuzla are mined, I have requested Commander, Kerch Strait to carry out clearance work. I calculate that by the time this task is completed the route south of Kossa Tuzla will have been swept so that, if necessary in an emergency, returning transports will be able to proceed by this route within the next few days.
- 0930 According to the forecast, no improvement in the weather is to be expected in the coming night. Operations of our own and Italian E-boats must

CONFIDENTIAL

-31-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(17)

therefore still be postponed.

1030

U 19 put in to Theodosia for refuel. From 24 January until 4 February she was in the operational area assigned to her southwest of Tuapse at a distance of approximately 20 miles from the coast. Up to 1 February nothing sighted. At 1810 on 2 February she attacked 2 destroyers which turned off shortly before they were fired on (range 2,000 meters). At 2000 the destroyers were out of sight. From 4 to 9 February she was in the patrol line off Novorossisk; no traffic observed.

U 19 was ordered to put out at 0630 on 12 February and take up position in the patrol line south of Novorossisk, remaining there until 18 February, then to put in to Constantza.

1120

Commander, Danube Flotilla reported that the FZ boats are frozen in at Pavlovski harbor. Operations of naval ferry barges with towed loop gear on the route south of Kossa Tuzla are likewise out of the question due to the prevailing heavy sea which makes it impossible to proceed with gear.

The E-boat Flotilla has received the following orders for the laying of the minefield at the enemy bridgehead south of Novorossisk (see War Diary, 10 February, 1500):

- "1. As soon as weather permits, 4 boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla will lay a single line of mines as a protection against enemy landings.
2. The minefield to be situated off Myshako parallel to and as close as possible to the coast; we are at present trying to discover the exact site of the previous enemy landing on this coastal sector and a supplementary order may be issued regarding the exact position of the minefield.
3. 24 UMB mines required, to be taken on at Theodosia on 12 February.
4. Depth setting minus 1 meter; do not set sinking mechanism and contact release. Block surface safety mechanism by setting screw.
5. Distance of mines apart: 50 meters.
6. Minefield must be laid unobserved by



CONFIDENTIAL

the enemy. Exact navigational position must be noted.

7. When the task is completed, send triplicate copy of mine report in writing to Admiral, Black Sea.

Additional Note:

24 UMB mines now in transit from Kerch to Theodosia where they will arrive provisionally on the morning of 12 February.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 78 AI."

The mines are now in transit from Kerch to Theodosia. If the weather improves, minelaying is planned for the night of 12/13 February.

- 1500 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 have swept route Brown from Sevastopol to Yalta with cutting kite sweep. No mines swept.
- 1648 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported that three of his platoons had returned from operations south of the city and have re-occupied the harbor positions. The forces which penetrated the previous day in the southern sector were mopped up. During the morning a Russian attack was beaten off.
- 1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported that 1 transport and 3 small craft were sighted at 1845, 800 meters off the west mole. Gunfire forced them off. With darkness the enemy increased their pressure on the southern sector.
- 2400 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported that the enemy is in possession of the coast from 1 kilometer east of Cape Myshako as far as the block of houses at the extreme south of the suburb of Stanitchka.
- After five more covering runs, minesweeper plane today completed checksweep of the eastern part of the route south of Kossa Tuzla. No mines swept.

CONFIDENTIAL

12 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation

No reports received from air reconnaissance regarding enemy forces in the central to eastern Black Sea. Harbor reconnaissance carried out up to and including Batum. Except for 1 cruiser, all large units were identified in the harbors of Poti and Batum.

One destroyer left Poti on a northwesterly course at 1100. The missing cruiser was sighted at 1130 with 1 patrol vessel in the sea area off Cape Pitsunda, on a southeasterly course. Shipping in Ghelenjik slight, some 2,500 tons and 15 small craft; at Tuapse 10,500 tons of merchant shipping. No important change in merchant shipping in harbor at Poti and Batum. Two large merchant ships about 25 miles southwest of Batum, one heading for Batum, the other at anchor off the coast, should be noted. They are probably Turkish ships trading between Batum and Trabzon. Otherwise one large 5,000 ton freighter with 2 patrol vessels on a northwesterly course in the sea area off Cape Pitsunda and escorted traffic and single vessels between Tuapse and Ghelenjik. During the morning a message was received from D/F Station that the destroyer reported at 1712 on 11 February by radio intercept service, was heading southeast in the area west of Gudant, another destroyer probably in the sea area off Sukhum and a third probably off Tuapse-Gudant at 1030. In addition, Main Naval D/F Station intercepted 2 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

0800 Own Situation:

Port Commander, Mariupol reported that he had been in personal contact with Army Group Don. Opinion there is that Mariupol is at present in no danger. Removal of any surplus stores has been advised and preparations for this have begun. Orders have been issued for removal of all valuable material from Tegenrog.

0900 Four naval ferry barges loaded with 550 barrels of fuel put out from Kolonka mole to Kosse Chuchka. Simultaneously two ferry barges left for the south with the ice-breaker "Kiel" to discover an alternative

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

route from Cape Takil to Cape Panagiya and possible moorings near Cape Panagiya. The ice situation in Taman Bay and at the fish-salting works is unchanged. Impossible to resume traffic.

Transportation of mines from Kerch to Theodosia has been delayed by bomb damage to the railway; hence the minelaying scheduled for tonight cannot take place. The 1st E-boat Flotilla has therefore been ordered to repeat the operation against enemy supplies off Novorossisk, concentrating on the area between Cape Myshako and Cape Doob, and to be in the operational area from 1900 to 0400 on the night of 12/13 February.

The two E-boats, S 40 and S 52, frozen in near Braila have been brought to safety with the help of Rumanian combined operations craft so that there is now no fear of damage when the ice melts.

Minesweeping Ju plane was operating today at the southern approach to Kerch Strait, between Cape Panagiya and Cape Takil, for checksweep of E-mines on what is planned eventually as the new supply route. Five covering runs were made but no mines swept (see War Diary 11 February).

- 0920 U 19 put out from Theodosia for the patrol line south of Novorossisk. On account of necessary repair to the compressor the original sailing time 0630, had to be delayed.
- 0958 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 transport and 6 small craft between 1900 and 2010 on 11 February approaching from the east of Zemeskaya Bay. When fired at they turned off under smoke cover. At 0505 five large transports and 2 patrol vessels were sighted in the direction of Zemeskaya Bay. The overall situation at the bridgehead is unchanged.
- 1400 The tug "Haniel 24" sank off the south dock at Kerch after explosion. Cause as yet undiscovered. It could scarcely be a non-contact mine in view of the shallow water (3-4 meters). One man was seriously injured, one only slightly.
- 1700 Four naval ferry barges loaded with 310 troops, 855 civilians (technicians and Caucasians) and 10 vehicles returned from Kossa Chuchka to Kolonka.

CONFIDENTIAL

Anapa

- 1849 Anapa heavily bombed. M.T.B.s off the harbor.
- 1945 Naval Liaison Officer/5th Army Command reported four transports off the Novorossisk bridgehead.
- 2014 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that Anapa was shelled from the sea by medium caliber guns.

Adverse weather has forced me to give up my plan to use the naval ferry barges lying in Theodosia against the vessels shelling Anapa. I have rejected the idea of possible operations against them by the 1st E-boat Flotilla, now at sea. Firstly, I consider the chief task to be restriction of supplies to the enemy bridgehead south of Novorossisk; secondly it is doubtful whether the Flotilla now in the vicinity of Novorossisk would arrive at Anapa in time.

- 2036 A message was received from Port Commander, Novorossisk stating that 4 transports and 3 escorts were sighted at 1840 between Kabardinka and the east mole and at about 2100 another message that traffic was continually proceeding to the landing site which was under fire from German guns. E-boats at sea were advised of this.

- 2115 Air Force Staff, Crimea detailed Ju 87 to attack the enemy transports.

Day and night during the last 24 hours there has been lively enemy air activity. In the course of repeated attacks, 55 bombs were dropped on Taman; no damage done.

Bombing raid on Yalta likewise achieved no results.

In the afternoon I took a "Storch" plane to Kerch and conferred with the Commander, Kerch Strait, Lieutenant General von Foerster. The spheres of authority were clearly defined. The Army will transport troops and supplies to the places of embarkation and re-transport them from the places of disembarkation. The Navy is responsible for all shipping in Kerch Strait. This means that all Army and Air Force sea transports must be under Operations Staff Scheurlen. Lieutenant General von Foerster noted that I would submit a request to Army Group A for this to be done.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

13 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance up to 80 kilometers off the German-occupied coast and in the eastern Black Sea yielded no result. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and the harbors was made only as far as Sukhum owing to bad weather and ice. Shipping at Ghelenjik was normal and comprised merchant shipping, 3 motor minesweepers, 20 other craft and 1 destroyer which put out for the south at 0700.

At Tuapse there were some 8,000 tons, 4 motor minesweepers, 5 coastal vessels, several other craft and 1 destroyer. During the morning two more destroyers were identified in the area Tuapse-Sukhum, probably those mentioned in harbor at Tuapse and Ghelenjik.

Both destroyers were on a southeasterly course, one as escort for a 5,000 ton freighter. Another 4,000 - 6,000 ton freighter with 2 patrol vessels and 1 motor minesweeper was on a southeasterly course in the sea area off Sochi. Also observed at 0835, 1 destroyer off Sukhum, at 0837, 1 submarine northwest of Batum. Otherwise only patrol vessels and small craft.

At 0935 Main Naval D/F Station reported 1 destroyer located roughly off the central east coast in radio communication with another destroyer. At midday, 1 destroyer some 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik. During the evening, 1 submarine was identified about 50 miles south of Yalta in communication with another submarine in the central to western Black Sea. Some small craft but no large units identified off north to central and southern part of the east coast. Three submarines were intercepted central to western Black Sea and three off the east coast, particularly the northern part of it, and 2 submarines central to southern east coast.

Own Situation

0800 1st E-boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba from night operations. From 2130 the boats lay in wait off Cape Doob; no shipping was observed although visibility was good and Novorossisk Bay, lit up by flares from German planes, could be clearly surveyed. After 0015, boats reconnoitered in the area between Suchuk and Myshako. Supply traffic at anchor; no patrol

CONFIDENTIAL

-37-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(123)

CONFIDENTIAL

vessels sighted. Air Force Staff, Crimea, who sent Stukas out against the reported transports, likewise failed to discover any enemy vessels despite use of flares in Kabardinka and Novorossisk Bay. Thus the report stating that transports landed further troops last night is incorrect. (See War Diary, 12 February, 2014.)

Kerch Strait

- 0830 The ice situation here is unchanged. Again today only possibility of operations is between Kolonka (Yenikale) and Kossa Chuchka. My suggestion for organization of a supply route from Cape Takil to Panagiya by making use of the favorable ice conditions in the southern part of Kerch Strait has been rejected by the Army because of the inadequate communications with the loading and unloading sites. The naval ferry barges detailed by me to survey the route have been recalled. The FZ groups are still frozen in at Pavlovski. The driving wheel of the motor generator of naval ferry barge No. 472 is out of order. Minesweeping on the route south of Kossa Tuzla to the fish-salting works cannot therefore start yet.
- 0930 According to the forecast, calm weather may be expected east and west of Kerch Strait during the coming night. 1st E-boat Flotilla has therefore been ordered to leave at 2000 for minelaying in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. Chefs. 78 AI (see War Diary, 11 Feb.) and, after completion of this task, to operate until 0400 against enemy supply traffic between Cape Doob and Myshako. Late departure is due to the fact that the moon does not go down until 0300; unobserved minelaying directly off the coast cannot be effected until then.
- 1053 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported further disembarkations at Novorossisk. Heavy air raids on Anapa; 116 bombs and bundles of heavy mortar ammunition were dropped. A naval bombardment with medium caliber guns took place between 2400 and 0300. Constant air raids and repeated naval shelling directed on Anapa suggest preparations for a large-scale action against this part of the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-38

PROPERTY INFORMATION

(124)

CONFIDENTIAL

1740 Naval ferry barges Nos. 566, 567 put out from Sevastopol to occupy a patrol line in the lee of the coast near Cape Sarich. They have orders to put in to Yalta at daybreak on 14 February.

1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported three direct hits on the quarters of Port Commander 16 at 1614. Naval telephone exchange put out of action; no losses.

1945 The following is the result of today's ferry traffic across Kerch Strait:

West - east: 380 tons of military supplies.

East - west: 70 soldiers, 1,542 civilians,  
15 vehicles, 41 tons of luggage.

Work on the anti-torpedo net barrage against aerial torpedoes off the coaling wharf at Sevastopol has now been concluded. Net Barrage Group Black Sea has orders to renew the damaged net barrage at Ivan Baba and to lay double anti-torpedo nets for the protection of steamer berths at Theodosia against torpedo attack by aircraft.

No reports have come in from the 3 U-boats out on position.

Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division, reported that the Italian Admiralty has agreed to man the Italian midget submarines in the Black Sea with Italian personnel again.

2015 Since 1700 the weather south of Kerch Strait has steadily deteriorated. At 1700 Anapa reported NE wind, force 4; at Ivan Baba at 2000, NE wind, force 5. E-boats carrying mines cannot weather a sea heavier than 3 since the mine rails connected to the wooden deck will not bear any greater strain. I find myself compelled to cancel sailing orders for 1st E-boat Flotilla.

During the morning I conferred with Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, Captain Wesemann, and was informed on the situation at Novorossisk and Anapa. As a result of this conference I made the following arrangements:

1. The principal duties of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus for the coming period are as follows:
  - a. To defend the Taman and Novorossisk coast against attack from the sea.

CONFIDENTIAL

-39-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(125)

CONFIDENTIAL

- b. To advise Army HQ 17 on questions of naval defense and general harbor problems.

Since Naval Shore Commander is too far removed from Army HQ 17 for the purpose of task b., he will transfer his headquarters back to Temriuk.

2. Port Commanders in Novorossisk and Anapa will remain at their posts until the Army demands that their units be dissolved or the harbors abandoned. Qualified specialists will be withdrawn.
3. Naval batteries in Anapa and Novorossisk will retain their naval crews. Even if the Army calls for the withdrawal of Port Commander units, the batteries are to remain in position until the Army gives orders for the abandonment of the harbors. Should the Naval Shore Commander and all units of the Port Commander transfer to the Crimea, then Naval Shore Commander's Artillery Officer will remain with the batteries until the abandonment is ordered.
4. Naval Shore Commander's Artillery Officer, who has only just been appointed, is primarily responsible for operations of coastal batteries on the Taman coast and near Anapa against naval objectives.

This afternoon I conferred with Group Wetzel (5th Army Command) at Kiyevskoye. I informed General Wetzel of the situation with regard to the naval war, of the Navy's resources in the Black Sea and plans for support of Army operations. There was complete agreement regarding future operations of the Naval Shore Commanders.

CONFIDENTIAL

-40-

CONFIDENTIAL

(126)



CONFIDENTIAL

14 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the eastern Black Sea was hampered by the weather. Survey of the east coast and the harbors could not be carried out. In the central Black Sea off the Turkish coast near Kerempe Burun, 1 Turkish freighter of 3,000 tons and 1 tanker of 15,000 tons were sighted, both on an easterly course.

At 0630 D/F Station Constantza intercepted 1 destroyer between Sochi and Tuapse. Three submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea, 4 in the area off the east coast, mainly northern to central section. Otherwise, according to radio traffic, little movement of vessels.

Own Situation:

- 0305 Radar at Cape Ili located a small vessel, probably a submarine, in Theodosia Bay. The alarm was given in the harbor sector of Theodosia. The vessel disappeared after location just as searchlights were searching Theodosia Bay. This supports the idea that she was a submarine. Latterly, submarines have repeatedly laid minefields in coastal waters and it may be that mines were being laid in the approach route to Theodosia.
- 0416 Theodosia harbor closed due to suspected mines.
- The two vessels of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla lying in Yalta, R 165 and R 163, were ordered to sweep the route Yalta - Theodosia and the Theodosia harbor approach with towed loop gear on 15 February.
- 0845 Italian E-boats put in to Yalta from the patrol line between Cape Sarich and Cape Aitidor; nothing sighted.
- 0930 The forecast promises calmer weather during the course of the afternoon. I have therefore decided to order 1st E-boat Flotilla to undertake minesweeping operations south of Myshako tonight.
- 1700 Motor minesweepers R 165, R 163 put in to Theodosia after completion of their mine-sweeping operations. Route Brown was swept once from point 11 to 12 and three times from 12

CONFIDENTIAL

-41-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(127)

CONFIDENTIAL

to the harbor approach but no mines were swept. The harbor will be reopened.

The harbor at Anapa and the gun sites there were repeatedly shelled from the sea during the past few nights by medium caliber guns. According to the results obtained by air reconnaissance and radio intelligence which intercepted destroyers off the central east coast during the forenoon, it may well be that destroyers are responsible for the gunfire. Repetition of the bombardment must be expected. Furthermore, the sometimes heavy air raids on Anapa suggest preparation for further landings near Anapa or on the south Taman coast. I have therefore ordered Italian E-boats to occupy a patrol line.

"Orders:

1. 3 boats of Italian E-boat Flotilla will put out from Theodosia at 1700 on 14 February and after 2000 will occupy a patrol line from Cape Utrish to the west. Length of the patrol line 10 miles.
2. At 0400 boats will leave the patrol line and re-enter Theodosia at approximately 0700.
3. Task: torpedo any valuable target.
4. Information:
  - a. At 2100 1st E-boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba for operations off Novorossisk and return to Ivan Baba at about 0800.
  - b. A German U-boat is stationed off Novorossisk; anti-submarine operations are therefore prohibited.

Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. AI."

1845

Italian E-boats in the patrol line turned back because of increasingly heavy seas. At 1957 on her return passage, Italian E-boat No. 569 sighted a surfaced submarine, course 90°, 10 miles east of Cape Ili. The E-boat fired two torpedoes at a range of 500 meters which the submarine evaded by means of rapid maneuver. After machine-gun fire she submerged. The E-boats' subsequent attack with depth charges yielded no visible results. Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

lying in Theodosia were ordered:

1. To put out immediately on anti-submarine operations off Theodosia;
2. If the submarine is not located by daybreak, it is to be assumed that she was minelaying on the approach route and the stretch from Theodosia to Cape Chauda is to be swept.

2220 Commander 1st E-boat Flotilla reported that operations were broken off owing to the weather;  
2330 boats put in to Ivan Baba.

2330 Motor minesweepers R 165, R 163 put out from Theodosia in accordance with orders.

Ice situation in Taman Bay and near the fish-salting works still unchanged. Ferry traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka was maintained. Today 182 tons of military supplies were loaded for Kossa Chuchka; 257 troops, 632 civilians, 60 horses, 71 vehicles and 35 tons of military supplies were transported by return.

To ensure smooth and unified control of transportation across Kerch Strait, subordination of all the transport resources of the three services to Naval Special Transport Staff Kerch is vital. I am therefore submitting the following request to Army Group A:

- "1. Naval Special Transport Staff Admiral Scheurlen at Kerch is ready to cooperate with Commander, Kerch Strait (Corps HQ for special duties) with regard to transportation tasks in Kerch Strait and control of traffic from Crimean ports.
2. The task of the Naval Special Transport Staff is central control of all vessels of the Navy, Army and Air Force used in the ferry service to and from the places of embarkation and disembarkation, and organization of a time-table to prevent congestion at those places and on the routes.
3. The Special Transport Staff will be responsible for the safety of supplies carried by sea. This includes observation of mines, checksweep of minefields, minesweeping if necessary, anti-aircraft defense at sea against low-flying planes, lights at night, buoyage and determining of routes.
4. For the purpose of smooth execution of the above tasks, subordination of all transport resources of the three services to Naval

CONFIDENTIAL

-43-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(129)

CONFIDENTIAL

Special Transport Staff is imperative.

5. Request you to issue relevant directive to Commander, Kerch Strait.

Admiral, Black Sea 868 AI".

Some of the barges at present employed in ferry traffic are temporarily out of action due to damage caused by ice. I have therefore ordered four of the ferry barges on call at Theodosia to proceed to Kerch on 15 February to be at the disposal of Naval Special Transport Staff.

Concurrently, 1st E-boat Flotilla was ordered to transfer four of the ferry barges withdrawn to Sevastopol to Yalta and four more to Theodosia on 15 February so that in case of further need at Kerch, these vessels could proceed there at short notice. Naval ferry barge No. 126 swept the western portion of the route south of Kossa Tuzla. Four covering runs revealed no mines.

A message from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea stated that minefield 58 (the central section of the reinforcing minefields laid off Constantza) was laid on 13 February by "Murgescu" and "Dacia" according to plan.

This morning I conferred with Army HQ 17 at Staro Litarovskaya. I explained the naval situation in the Black Sea to Lieutenant General Ruoff and discussed the preparation and possibilities of ferry traffic across Kerch Strait. At my suggestion and by agreement with Army HQ 17 and Army Command 5, Commander Betzendahl has been withdrawn as Naval Liaison Officer with Group Wetzel and appointed as Liaison Officer to Army HQ 17. In this way the Army HQ, which is the nerve center of the Army in the Caucasus, can always be in contact with the Naval Shore Commander and, in emergency, with Admiral, Black Sea.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

15 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors was hampered by the weather and could only be flown as far as Sukhum. Heavy seas prevented sea-planes from starting for reconnaissance of the central and eastern Black Sea. Shipping in harbor at Ghelenjik comprised about 7,000 tons of merchant shipping and several other craft; at Tuapse about 11,400 tons of merchant shipping, 1 destroyer and some small craft. Apart from 1 tanker of 2,500 tons on a northwesterly course 5 miles south of Gudant, only slight patrol activity discovered.

At 0950 according to radio intercept report, one destroyer stood in the area of Sochi-Tuapse and at 1000 another off Tuapse. Otherwise survey of radio traffic disclosed only slight activity of small craft.

Own Situation:

- 0930 The weather forecast for the coming night for sea area between Yalta and Novorossisk is as follows: SW wind, force 4. The decision regarding operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats will be made after the weather chart for 1400 has been submitted.
- 1157 Meteorological station Simferopol issued gale warnings for the south and west Crimea with SW winds, force 7, veering W to NW, force 7, during the afternoon. Thus operations of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats are out of the question.
- 1200 Motor minesweepers R 165, R 163 put in to Theodosia after unsuccessful anti-submarine operations. Route Brown, points 12-13 and 13-14, were each swept twice with cutting kite sweep; no mines swept.
- 1703 U 24 reported that she was about to return from the operational area between Adler and Pitsunda for Constantza. The Air Force have been prohibited anti-submarine operations over her return passage.
- 1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported the situation at the bridgehead unchanged. The night of 14/15 February was peaceful. Lively artillery activity of both sides by day. Bombs were dropped on German infantry posts and the southern

CONFIDENTIAL

-45-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(131)

CONFIDENTIAL

quarter of the city. Hit scored on Sea Transportation Section, buildings damaged. Heavy artillery bombardment of the southern town at 1530; hits were scored on the quarters of Port Commander 18, the Battle HQ of Port Commander 16 and the hospital. No losses sustained apart from damage to buildings.

2035 Ferry traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka was continued today by naval ferry barges and combined operations craft. 35 soldiers and 246 tons of military supplies were shipped to the east; 288 soldiers, 200 Todt Organization personnel, 287 civilians, 84 horses and 32 vehicles were shipped back.

Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division, informed me that Command of 4th Air Force had received orders to counter further landings south of Novorossisk and to attack enemy ships and harbors, also to mine Kabardinka Bay and the inner Zemeskaya Bay. In order that further operations of 1st E-boat Flotilla off Novorossisk Bay should not be imperilled and to ensure more effective mining of the enemy-occupied coast near Myshako, I have requested the 8th Air Corps to see to it that the Air Force does not drop mines south of the line Cape Doob to Kossa Suchuk.

The route south of Kossa Tuzla was today swept by an FZ-group and F 126, with towed loop gear. A non-contact mine was swept in  $45^{\circ} 13.9' N$ ,  $36^{\circ} 30.5' E$ , in water 8 meters deep, some 20 meters outside the loop of the sweeping gear. The Commander, Don Flotilla received orders to continue checksweep south of Kossa Tuzla with all available minesweeping gear on 16 February.

Minesweeping plane made a checksweep of the eastern part of the route and the channel between Kossa Tuzla and Cape Tuzla as far as 5 miles to the east; ten covering runs revealed no mines.

The mine-laying course for mine section 1 in the southern approach to Kerch Strait was sounded and marked out.

CONFIDENTIAL

16 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the central and eastern Black Sea produced no result. Air reconnaissance of the east coast and harbors took place in spite of adverse weather in some places; all ports, apart from Tuapse, were observed. All the heavy ships of the enemy fleet, also 1 light cruiser, the large destroyer "Charkov" and 6 destroyers, were identified in harbor at Poti and Batum. Shipping at Ghelenjik which comprised 1 merchant ship of 1,000 to 1,500 tons and 4 coastal vessels had considerably decreased compared with the previous days. Only slight traffic was observed over the whole coastal area.

During the morning Main Naval D/F Station Constantza intercepted the destroyer reported at 0950 yesterday. She was on a southeasterly course in the area Sochi/Gudant.

During the evening radio reconnaissance intercepted another unit in the area Poti/Batum, probably a destroyer. Radio traffic revealed 3 submarines in the central and western Black Sea, 1 off the east coast.

Survey:

The almost daily change in the shipping at Ghelenjik seems to indicate that it is the principal supply port for transports taking men and materials to the Novorossisk sector and that vital naval traffic is continually passing through the Tuapse/Ghelenjik coastal waters.

Own Situation:

On her return to Constantza, U 24 reported following incidents in her operational area between Adler and Cape Pitsunda:

1. Salvo of 2 torpedoes on destroyer; pistols failed.
2. No supply traffic observed; destroyers were proceeding at a distance of 15 to 20 miles from the coast.
3. Repairs will require three weeks in the shipyard, including four days in dock.

CONFIDENTIAL

-47-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(133)

CONFIDENTIAL

U 24 was in her operational area from 10-15 February. During that time the Air Force repeatedly sighted steamers in the area northwest and southeast of Cape Pitsunda. Hence U 24's report as under fig. 2 requires some explanation.

1128

Air attack on the naval ferry barges proceeding from Sevastopol to Theodosia south of Cape Aitodor. Four bombs fell approximately 200 meters from the leading vessel but no damage was done.

The necessity for unified and strict control of ferry traffic demands that all naval units and army offices participating should be subordinate to the Naval Special Transport Staff at Kerch.

I therefore order that:

- "1. Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch will be formed to deal with transportation across the Kerch Strait, Admiral Scheurlen to be in command.
2. Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch will be responsible, subject to the directive of Admiral, Black Sea, for the entire supply traffic across the Kerch Strait.
3. For operational purposes the following will be subordinate to Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch:
  - a. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. In addition to the 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla, all those naval ferry barges of the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla employed in ferry traffic across the Kerch Strait will be under his command for operational purposes.
  - b. Sea Transportation Section, Kerch with its tugs and lighters and the branch sections at Taman, Sennaya and Temriuk.
  - c. Port Commanders, Kerch, Taman and Temriuk, in all matters to do with ferry traffic.
  - d. Naval Fitting-Out Depot, Kerch in all matters to do with repair and maintenance of ferry services. Such repairs have absolute priority.

CONFIDENTIAL

-48-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(134)



- e. Group Krommweh of the Office of the Naval Pilotage and Seamarks Authority, Sevastopol, for the buoyage of the routes in the Kerch Strait and the organization of lights by night.
- f. Those Groups and boats of the Don Flotilla and the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla employed on transportation across the Kerch Strait.

4. Supplement to 3a. and b.:

At the request of the Special Transport Staff, Admiral, Black Sea will transfer to Kerch naval ferry barges lying in Crimean and west coast harbors, also tugs and lighters, as soon as ice conditions permit an increase in ferry traffic.

- 5. Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch will be in touch with all those Army and Air Force stations concerned in transportation tasks across the Kerch Strait, particularly with Commander, Kerch Strait, and will cooperate directly with them.
- 6. Army Group A has been requested to subordinate all Army transports used in ferry traffic to Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch. A similar request will be sent to the VIIIth Air Corps.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos 926 AI."

1300

The weather forecast for the coming night promises wind south, force 5, sea 4 with heavy swell from yesterday's strong southwest wind. Operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla must therefore again be abandoned.

The plans for minelaying off the landing site near Myshako by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla have been constantly postponed recently owing to adverse weather and must now be shelved until 26 February on account of the coming full moon period; it is impossible to lay a minefield unobserved directly off the coast during bright moonlight nights. The Flotilla has been ordered to store the mines already taken over at Ivan Baba. I plan to use the E-boats against enemy supplies in the area Tuapse-Novorossisk during the next few days.

During her last operation E-boat S 26 damaged her screw in a collision, probably with a piece of drift-wood. As soon as weather

CONFIDENTIAL

1300 permits the boat must go to Constantza for exchange. Until the arrival of S 47, which should be ready for operations at Constantza on the evening of 17 February, I shall have only 3 operational E-boats at my disposal.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163, were ordered to sweep the route to and from Theodosia to Cape Takil on 17 February with kite cutting sweep.

The route south of Kossa Tuzla to the fish-salting works was today swept by 2 FZ-groups and F 126 with towed loop gear. One non-contact mine was swept in  $45^{\circ} 14.2' N, 36^{\circ} 28.2' E$  and one in  $45^{\circ} 13.92' N, 36^{\circ} 30.2' E$ . These minesweeping successes make it impossible for us to open the route yet. Commander, Don Flotilla was ordered to continue mine-sweeping on 17 February with all the available gear.

A 5-km. wide strip in the swept channel between Kossa Tuzla and Cape Tuzla was checked by minesweeping plane; five covering runs were made but no mines swept.

The oncoming thaw has to some extent eased ice conditions in parts of the Kerch Strait. Kerch-Taman traffic is impossible as yet owing to strong fast ice. Some of the naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries ice-bound off the fish-salting works are now free. On 17 February I shall attempt to transfer them to Kerch, blasting the ice if necessary. The following were transported to Kossa Chuchka by 1 naval ferry barge and combined operations boats: 6 soldiers, 172 tons of military supplies, and by return, 668 troops, 563 civilians, 313 horses, 21 horse-drawn vehicles, 80 lorries, 142 tons of military supplies and 152 prisoners of war.

Today six naval ferry barges were transferred from Theodosia to Kerch for use in ferry traffic and mining operations. Four naval ferry barges were withdrawn from Sevastopol back to Theodosia.

Apart from the attack on the ferry barge formation already reported, Russian Air Force activity was limited to bombing of harbor installations at Taman. The three bombs dropped did not do any damage.

CONFIDENTIAL

-50-

(136)

CONFIDENTIAL

The situation at the Novorossisk bridgehead remains unchanged. Enemy artillery fire recently caused damage to buildings at the Administration and Supply Depot, docks, quarters of Port Commanders 16 and 18 and the Battle H.Q. of the Port Commander.

CONFIDENTIAL

-51-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(137)

CONFIDENTIAL

17 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance observed no shipping at sea. Enemy fighter defense prevented reconnaissance of the coast between Sukhum and Batum. Only a few ships in harbor at Ghelenjik and Tuapse. One tanker of approximately 6,000 tons escorted by 2 motor minesweepers, course 120°, was proceeding at high speed south of Gagri and there was also very lively traffic of small freighters up to 1,000 tons, motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s between Tuapse and Sukhum.

The D/F Station failed to identify any activity of larger ships off the entire east coast. Four submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 1 in the eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0930

The weather forecast for the sea area Yalta-Novorossisk for the coming night is as follows: southeast wind, force 3-4, fair to cloudless, visibility 10 miles.

Thus operations by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla are possible but the Italian E-boats cannot go out. The present moonlight nights preclude E-boat operations immediately off Novorossisk Bay between Cape Doob and Cape Mysheko. Another factor is that the constant change in the shipping in Ghelenjik harbor indicates that a large quantity of supply traffic comes to this port from the southeast. According to prisoners of war Ghelenjik is the main supply port for the Novorossisk sector. Damage to this supply traffic will relieve the German Army. I have therefore decided to use the 3 operational boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla against supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik on the night of 17/18 February, concentrating on Cape Idokopas.

1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to stand in this attack area between 2100 and 0400 and subsequently to put in to Ivan Baba.

1039

An enemy plane approached Ivan Baba. As anti-aircraft defenses fired, a bright tongue of flame was seen to emerge from the left motor and the plane quickly lost height.

CONFIDENTIAL

-52-

CONFIDENTIAL

(138)

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1100 Ferry barge F 473, proceeding from Sevastopol to Yalta, struck a drifting mine west of Cape Chersones. The commander and 11 men were lost. She was towed to Sevastopol by F 474.
- 1500 At intervals during the day and night Novorossisk was under heavy gunfire. Hits were scored on the quarters of Port Commander 18 and Coastal Shipping Control Office VII, Sea Transportation Section and H.Q. of Port Commander 17. One bomb hit the building of Sea Transportation Section. German attacks on the bridgehead reached the ordered targets.
- 1800 To strengthen the number of transports in the Kerch Strait ferry barges F 314, 315, 368 and 369 were ordered to transfer from Theodosia to Kerch on 18 February. They will be at the disposal of Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch.
- 1945 Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 swept route Brown to and from Theodosia to Cape Takil with cutting kite sweep; no mines swept.
- 2000 The persistent thaw yesterday and today again eased ice conditions in the Kerch Strait. A prevailing south wind has thawed the ice from the fish salting works, freeing the 4 naval ferry barges and 8 Siebel ferries ice-bound there. The barges have returned to Kerch. Two Siebel ferries resumed traffic from Kerch to the fish salting works.

The following were taken on at Kerch today:

118 soldiers, 15 vehicles, 248 tons of military supplies; by return 375 troops, 525 civilians, 1,100 prisoners, 108 horses, 113 vehicles and 123 tons of military supplies.

Minesweeping operations south of Tuzla continued with three sets of gear. In the course of the ninth run another non-contact mine, probably a German EM, was swept.

Loading of the naval ferry barges for section 1 of the minefield was begun today. Section 1 is to be laid on 19 February and, if the good weather continues, sections 2-4 on the following three days.

Minefield S 59 was laid today according to schedule. Thus reinforcement of the minefield system at Constantza is now complete.

CONFIDENTIAL

During the day there were repeated air raids on Taman with a total of 39 bombs dropped; no damage to naval property.

Convoys proceeded according to plan today. Two steamer convoys, "Ardeal" and "Tissa", coming from Constantza put in to Sevastopol.

CONFIDENTIAL

-54-

(140)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

18 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance could not be flown on account of adverse weather (mist).

Apart from normal activity of small craft Main Naval D/F Station identified no movements of large ships. Two submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 2 more off the east coast, probably on the outward and homeward passage.

Own Situation:

- 0830 1st E-boat Flotilla put in for refuel after the night's operations. From 2100 the boats lay in wait off Cape Idokopas. At 0200 they attacked a steamer of about 1,000 tons escorted by 2 coastal vessels, course northwest. By the clear full moon the boats were recognized and fired upon. Renewing the attack S 28 fired 2 torpedoes which the steamer evaded. At 0320 S 28 sank a lighter of 500 G.R.T. The boats again hauled ahead of the escorted steamer and attacked a third time. Again the enemy anticipated the attack and evaded 2 torpedoes fired by S 102. The enemy countered with gunfire, also using her machine-guns. None of the E-boats was damaged. A further attack was not possible since the steamer put in to Ghelenjik. The boats left the operational area at approximately 0400. Apart from the vessels attacked only 1 coastal vessel and 1 E-boat were sighted. During the night from 2100 to 0400, there was no supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik; it was impossible in such good visibility for vessels to slip through unseen.
- 0900 Air Force "Wuerzburg" gear at Theodosia obtained a bearing on a plane over Theodosia Bay, circling in heavy mist at a height of 300 meters. Motor minesweepers Nos. 165 and 163 were ordered to sweep the route from Theodosia to Cape Chauda.
- 1030 U 24 put in to Constantza.
- U 19 started on her return passage from the operational area south of Novorossisk and, after refuel at Theodosia, reported the result of her brief operation from a position at sea as follows: "Fired at destroyer. Missed." She will put in to Constantza provisionally on 19 February.

CONFIDENTIAL

-55-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(141)

CONFIDENTIAL

E-boat S 47 ready for action. As soon as weather permits she will be transferred to Ivan Baba.

Harbor Defense Flotilla Sevastopol swept the approach to Sevastopol and the route northward as far as Cape Lukull; nothing to report.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea requested assignment of another motor minesweeper since, with 3 Rumanian destroyers and 1 minesweeper out of action, he has only 2 motor minesweepers and 2 coastal vessels at his disposal for escort of steamer convoys to Sevastopol. While I fully recognize his demand and the importance of having the convoys sail to schedule, I am unable to meet his request since the two remaining vessels of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla at present serviceable cannot be spared. They are essential whenever there is a call for immediate minesweeping of the supply route off the Crimean coast, at present a vital route which is repeatedly mined by Russian submarines. Motor Minesweeper R 30, the leader of the Don Flotilla, is urgently needed for tasks in the Kerch Strait.

1300 Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 put in to Theodosia after completion of minesweeping operations; nothing to report.

Simferopol

According to the weather forecast the wind during the coming night will be north to northeast, force 4. I have decided on operations by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and the Italian E-boats and have issued orders that:

1. Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will repeat last night's operations and operate from 2100 to 0400 between Tuapse and Ghelenjik against enemy supply traffic just off the coast.
2. At the same time 3 boats of Italian E-Boat Flotilla will operate on a similar task between Ghelenjik and Cape Myshako.

Since U 9 is in the attack area south of Novorossisk, these boats are forbidden anti-submarine operations. U 9 has been advised of their operations.

Naval Liaison Officer at Army Group A informed me that my request for subordination of all

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



vessels used for ferry traffic to Naval Special Transport Staff could not be granted. I again submitted my reasons and personally repeated my request to the Commander in Chief, Army Group A who agreed to reconsider the matter. Subsequently he sent me certain queries and requested a fresh statement in writing which I submitted as follows:

"Re direction of ferry traffic Kerch Strait:

Distinguish between:

- Case a. Return transportation of men and equipment according to plan.
- Case b. Rapid evacuation of Gotenkopf owing to enemy pressure; equipment left behind; simultaneous naval and air attacks against the Taman and Kerch Peninsula and the Kerch Strait to be expected.

Case a.

The aim is optimum efficiency with no avoidable losses. To this end it is necessary:

1. To safeguard the sea area against enemy action, particularly against minelaying by aircraft. This means that the routes between the east and west shores must be fixed, cleared, marked, lighted and checked, and watch kept day and night by patrol vessels. (Admiral, Black Sea will himself take over flank protection against the open sea in the south and if necessary in the north. He will have offensive naval forces, E- and U-boats at his disposal and will also use flank minefields.)
2. To ensure safe working of the naval transport service. This demands weather observation and forecasting to enable ferry operations to begin and end at the proper time. The effects of sea and wind on the landing sites and the possibilities of loading and unloading must be observed, pilot service provided in poor visibility. Traffic to be directed on favorable routes and carried out by suitable vessels.
3. To provide naval rescue service for accidents caused through vessels being driven aground or into minefields, or through enemy action (mines, bombs).
4. For best possible utilization of shipping

space, including ships from the southern Crimean ports, and for most efficient defense, unified control by a staff with experience at sea and understanding of naval warfare is imperative. The staff appointed by the Navy (Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch) is presented as the most competent for this naval task, and for operational purposes the naval transport resources of all three services must be subordinate to them. In the direction of operations (particularly landing places and timing) and risks to be incurred (enemy action or weather) they must be guided by the demands of Corps H.Q. for Special Duties Kerch.

Case b.

1. The task is fundamentally the same. The demand for maximum efficiency in ferry traffic emphasizes the need for strict pooling of all resources and due regard for the situation at Gotenkopf. The only way to meet this need is by very close cooperation between the Naval Special Transport Staff and Corps H.Q. for Special Duties Kerch.
2. Defense against enemy attacks will be a matter for joint action by all three services and naval units fighting ashore against landings will be subordinate to local Army commanders. With regard to continuance or breaking-off of ferry traffic in the event of enemy action on the ferry routes the orders of Corps H.Q. for Special Duties hold good.

Naval Special Transport Staff must inform Corps H.Q. of its views on the risks incurred. The Special Transport Staff is subject to Corps H.Q.'s decision and must accordingly commit all resources without regard for possible losses in personnel and material. The fact that shipping losses may lead to considerable limitation of transport facilities in the future must be accepted.

3. Admiral, Black Sea will order naval operations in closest collaboration with Army Group A- (the first duty of any available E- and U-boats will be to engage the approaching enemy)."

CONFIDENTIAL

1645 Information received from Air Force Staff, Crimea according to which, between 2200 and 2230 on 17 February in air grid squares 8550, 8560, 8580, night reconnaissance planes of 4th Air Force sighted some 15 freighters of 500 to 1,000 G.R.T., course north to northwest, 10 freighters of 500 to 1,000 G.R.T., course south to southwest and, south of Novorossisk, 5 freighters of 500 G.R.T., course north. Air Force Staff, Crimea described the sighting report as most improbable since it did not tally with that of 17 February.

From 2100 to 0400 on the night of 17/18 February, the 1st E-Boat Flotilla stood between Cape Idokopas and Ghelenjik and despite good visibility and bright moonlight they did not sight any of all these 30 freighters.

As mist prevented morning air reconnaissance today further investigation is impossible. In my opinion the report does not tally with the facts.

Ice conditions in the Kerch Strait are unchanged. Five Siebel ferries are still ice-bound at Taman. Traffic from Kerch to the fish-salting works continued and the following were taken over:

Easterly direction: 265 troops, 30 vehicles, 365 tons of military supplies.

Westerly direction: 264 troops, 285 horses, 172 vehicles, 91 tons of military supplies.

1700 The E-boats turned back since operations were impossible owing to sudden deterioration in the weather: wind northwest, force 5-6, squally. Captain Mimbelli sailed by E-boat as far as Cape Ili to observe the weather and later the Italian E-boats likewise reported that operations could not continue as ordered.

Minesweeping south of Cape Tuzla had to be broken off today on account of heavy drift ice.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported situation at the bridgehead unchanged. Slight artillery fire by day and night on harbor and southern quarter of the town. Buildings of Port Commander 18 and Battle H.Q. Port Commander 16 were damaged.

A flight across the Taman Peninsula to Anapa gives a striking impression of the long flat

CONFIDENTIAL

coast from Cape Panagiya to Wesselovka which affords the enemy excellent opportunities for landing. This part of the coast east of the Kerch Strait at present possesses only 2 Army coastal batteries, each with six 15.5 cm. guns and 1 naval battery of four 12.2 cm. guns. That is insufficient. I have sent a message via the Naval Liaison Officer calling the attention of Army Group A to the fact that renewed enemy occupation of Novorossisk would further endanger shipping in the Kerch Strait and bring risk of landings on the south coast of the Taman Peninsula or the Crimea. However thorough the destruction of harbor installations at Novorossisk, the enemy would not long be prevented from again using this natural harbor as the starting point for naval operations. It is therefore an urgent matter to reinforce the defenses of the Taman Peninsula with any Army batteries which may be released.

Naval Liaison Officer/Army Group A today informed me that there is a shortage of tractors and fuel in the Caucasus area so that new batteries cannot be got into position.

CONFIDENTIAL

-60-

3. MAR 1945

(146)

CONFIDENTIAL

19 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the sea area off Sevastopol and in the southeastern Black Sea in varying visibility yielded no result. Despite adverse weather, reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors was flown. Poti and Batum were not observed owing to the weather. There were 2 coastal vessels and 2 small craft off the Novorossisk bridgehead during the morning. One destroyer, some 5,000 tons of merchant shipping, several motor minesweepers and E-boats at Ghelenjik; about 9,000 tons of merchant shipping at Tuapse and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons off the harbor approach. Otherwise remarkably little coastal traffic.

According to the D/F Station no heavy surface forces appeared in radio traffic. Traffic of small craft off the east coast was very slight. Three submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea, 2 in the area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

1300 Simferopol meteorological station forecast wind north to northwest, force 6-7, for the coming night. Intended operations by our own and Italian E-boats must be further postponed.

1330 U 19 put in to Constantza. from operations.

Continuous strong westerly winds have freed the central and southern sections of the Kerch Strait of ice. In the western section, particularly on the west bank of Kossa Chuchka, pack ice is causing serious obstruction. The fish-salting works are ice-free so that transports from Kerch to the works can proceed unimpeded.

Section 1 of the minefield in the southern approach to the Kerch Strait was laid today by 10 naval ferry barges led by Commander, Don Flotilla, on board motor minesweeper R 30; 108 UMB mines, 16 UMA mines and 152 explosive buoys were laid.

Kerch

1530 Formation put in again.

On account of the weather and the need for

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

repairing slight damage to the ferry barges, laying of section 2 has been postponed for 24 hours and fixed for 21 February.

Minelaying by the FZ-group had to be broken off owing to heavy seas.

Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 472, equipped with cutting kite sweeps, were ordered to store the equipment with Mining and Barrage Command, Kerch so that it can be used by Naval Special Transport Staff.

1730 Figures for ferry traffic on 19 February:

Easterly direction 370 troops, 1 anti-aircraft platoon, 3 vehicles, 328 tons of military supplies.

These low figures are due to the fact that it was impossible to get sufficient material and troops prepared at the loading site because of the muddy condition of the roads leading to the fish-salting works. The naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries were therefore not used to full advantage.

Four naval ferry barges were today transferred from Theodosia to Kerch. Three ferry barges proceeded from Yalta to Theodosia carrying timber for bridge building at the loading stations in the Kerch Strait. Two proceeded empty from Sevastopol to Yalta. Weather permitting, those barges which have put in to Theodosia are to proceed to Kerch on 20 February; those which have put in at Yalta, after loading up with timber, are provisionally to transfer to Theodosia on 22 February.

1800 Naval Liaison Officer/Army Group A reported that after an interview between the Fuhrer and Commander in Chief Army Group A, it has been decided not to subordinate the combined operations boats to the Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch. I have informed Group South of this decision in the following teletype (for the information of Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division) together with my comments and a request that the affair should be reconsidered:

"1. In accordance with instructions Army Group A was requested to subordinate the combined operations boats to

CONFIDENTIAL

-62-

NAVY INTELLIGENCE

(148)

CONFIDENTIAL

Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch for operational purposes. To begin with Army Group A refused, mainly on the grounds that healthy competition between naval and combined operations boats would result in greater efficiency. The final decision is still pending.

2. Apparently today, 19 February, the Army Group submitted the question to the Führer. According to advance information by telephone he decided in their favor against subordination of the combined operations boats to Naval Special Transport Staff.
3. I consider that the competitive idea jeopardizes the larger issue, since sporting rivalry may lead to isolated measures which, unintentionally, may damage the overall scheme.
4. Collaboration of so many vessels urgently demands unified control.
5. This is a typical instance of the Army mentality which demands total and supreme command on land and refuses to accept subordination at sea.
6. I presume that there was no naval representative at the Führer interview. I propose that the affair should be reopened. My reasons, which went into specific situations and were submitted to the Commander in Chief, Army Group A at his request, will follow separately as appendix.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 1021/43."

Novorossisk

1900 Report from Port Commander, Novorossisk: During the day the harbor area was shelled, hits were scored on the buildings of Sea Transportation Section; no casualties. German attacks on Myshako are in progress. Naval losses: 6 killed by direct hit from a shell on a concrete bunker in the southern infantry sector.

Naval Liaison Officer/Army Group A reported on 16 February that we must expect withdrawal of the Caucasus front to the small Gotenkopf area. This would mean evacuation of Novorossisk, which would immediately become a favorable base for further operations by the

CONFIDENTIAL

Russian Fleet. I considered it essential to warn Army Group A of the possible consequences of evacuating Novorossisk and instructed Naval Liaison Officer to pass on the following information:

- "1. However thorough the demolition work in Novorossisk, if it should be re-occupied, the enemy would soon be able to use this natural harbor again for naval operations.
2. This would mean an increased threat to naval traffic at Kerch and danger of landings on the south coast of the Taman Peninsula and the Crimea.
3. The present strength of the Taman Peninsula - 3 Army coastal batteries and 1 naval battery - is by no means sufficient, in view of the long flat coast, for effective protection against increased threat by enemy naval forces. Hence, urgently request that any Army coastal batteries which are released should be used to reinforce the Taman coast."

Army Group A today replied:

"The Army Group is well aware of the consequences of the evacuation of Novorossisk, but such action is the natural corollary of 17th Army operations. If the coastal batteries at Novorossisk and Anapa can be brought back intact, there will then be 10 batteries available, some of which will be set aside for coastal protection of the Taman Peninsula."

E-boat S 26 is fit for action and will be rapidly transferred to Ivan Baba with S 27. On their arrival S 102 will be released for scheduled engine overhaul at Constantza, now overdue.



CONFIDENTIAL

20 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea was without result. 25 miles north of Samsun in the central Black Sea area 1 Turkish freighter of 5,000 tons was sighted on an easterly course. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast was hampered by the weather. No enemy shipping was identified between Kerch and Novorossisk. Kabardinka Bay was unoccupied. During the morning a merchant ship of 5,000 tons, on a northwesterly course with strong escort, stood 15 miles southwest of Ochemchiri. One extra tanker of 1,000 tons was observed in Ghelenjik harbor, 1 small freighter and 2 coastal vessels in Sukhum. Adverse weather prevented observation of the remaining harbors.

At 1345 Main Naval D/F Station intercepted 1 destroyer in the sea area Tuapse-Adler. Otherwise D/F Station reported only slight activity of small craft off the east coast. It intercepted 2 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 2 submarines off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Ivan Baba

- 0730 E-boats S 26 and S 47 put in from Constantza.
- 0930 Weather situation: during the second half of the night the wind slackened to northwest, force 3-4. According to the forecast the wind will veer west during the afternoon and freshen to force 4-5.

Operations of our own and Italian E-boats will not be decided until the weather chart for 1400 has been submitted.

- 1500 According to the new forecast the wind tonight should be west to westsouthwest, force 5-6. Ivan Baba already reports wind force 5. Thus again today intended E-boat operations must be abandoned since the boats would not be able to make use of their armament.

Novorossisk

- 1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight activity by artillery on both sides; buildings of the Sea Transportation Section slightly

CONFIDENTIAL

-65-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(151)

damaged. At 1830 a boat was sighted in Kabardinka Bay; she turned off under cover of a smoke screen on being fired upon. No change in the situation on the southern infantry sector.

1900

The FZ-group swept the western sector of the route from Kamish Burun as far as the Tuzla channel. Two sets of gear were used; both sides of the line of buoys were swept once using both sweeps together, while the eastern sector was searched 5 times; no mines swept.

Mines for section 2 of the minefield in the southern part of the Kerch Strait have been taken on by the laying formation. Weather permitting, the minefield will be laid on 21 February.

The ice situation in the Kerch Strait is unchanged. The route to the fish-salting works north of Kossa Tuzla is ice-free. Off Taman there is still fast ice and heaped-up drift ice. A bomber plane today began blasting a channel to Taman. Thus three ice-bound Siebel ferries were freed and put in to Kerch in the afternoon. Ice-blasting by plane will be continued on 21 February in order to make a channel as far as Taman.

Seven naval ferry barges today operated on the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works. They did the eastward passage empty in order to bring back troops and material. The 2 barges which returned from the fish-salting works to Kerch brought only 3 lorries, 4 personnel trucks, 1 trailer and 30 soldiers, since there was no further material ready to return. This was again due to the fact that the roads to the loading site were blocked by mud. It was not even possible to convey personnel. Transportation figures today were:

1. West to east: 120 tons of military supplies, 3 searchlights with power units, 2 lorries, 67 soldiers.
2. East to west: 1,489 troops, 762 civilians, 1,721 prisoners, 515 horses, 93 lorries, 62 personnel trucks, 58 horse-drawn vehicles, 9 field kitchens, 14 trailers, 10 tons of overhead cable equipment.

Apart from the naval ferry barges conveying loads from the fish-salting works to Kerch, combined operations craft were engaged in

CONFIDENTIAL

transport work between Kossa Chuchka and Yenikale, where the ice situation permitted traffic to cross unimpeded. The barges assigned to the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works, at present not being employed to full capacity, cannot use this latter route because the water at the loading sites is not deep enough to permit them to go alongside. Combined operations craft are more suitable and their frequent use over this short passage might result in considerable transportation achievements.

Two naval ferry barges today transported timber for building of landing stages in the Kerch Strait from Sevastopol to Yalta and on 21 February will proceed to Theodosia.

CONFIDENTIAL

-67-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(153)

CONFIDENTIAL

21 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Persistent bad weather today again prevented air reconnaissance. A reconnaissance sortie into the central and southeastern Black Sea yielded no result. Harbors and coast south of Tuapse and Tuapse itself were not observed owing to adverse weather. There was only 1 freighter of 2,000 tons and 4 coastal vessels in Ghelenjik harbor, also 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, course northwest, 15 miles south of Tuapse. No further shipping was observed off the entire coast.

According to D/F Station no surface ship activity was revealed by radio traffic. Activity of small craft was normal. One submarine was intercepted off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Kerch

0600 Minelaying formation of 10 naval ferry barges put out for laying of section 2. The weather compelled them to turn back at 0800 and return to Kerch. The task was postponed until 22 February.

As a result of the southwest wind there is only loose drift ice between the fish-salting works and Taman. A strip of fast ice 300 meters broad is lying off the landing stage at Taman; during the morning it will be broken up by bombs and tugs. Hence operations of naval ferry barges to Taman will be possible today for the first time. Twelve of them will proceed from Kerch to Taman.

1030 Commander Wegener arrived from the Führer's Headquarters where he had received instructions regarding ferry operations in the Kerch Strait. The Fuehrer issued orders that this task must be regarded as the most vital naval task since the Norwegian operation, to be carried out with all the available resources and to be given absolute priority. The operational vessels at present in the area, unless required for the important Crimean convoys, have been assembled for ferry operations in Kerch Strait; those frozen in the harbors of Nikolaiev and Odessa will join them later. It is imperative, however, that the dockyard period be curtailed and new construction work speeded up. This

CONFIDENTIAL

-68-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(154)

CONFIDENTIAL

in its turn requires increased dockyard capacity. I have therefore requested Naval High Command and Group South:

1. To complete dockyard periods for naval ferry barges at Varna by 10 March, for motor minesweepers (RA group) at Galatz by 15 March (their engines have been in Amsterdam for complete overhaul since the end of January). Period of overhaul must be curtailed, rapid transport is vital.
2. To complete 1st Group of armed fishing vessels with all possible speed and expedite construction of new naval ferry barges at Varna by filling up gaps in materials and spare parts and providing extra personnel.
3. To save long sea passage and relieve Varna for work on construction of new armed fishing vessels and naval ferry barges by providing personnel and materials for the complete overhaul or occasional structural and engine repairs, to barges at Naval Fitting-out Depot, Sevastopol. It will be possible to use the north dock after the end of February. We must be prepared for considerable damage to barges sustained through enemy action and wear and tear.

After talking over the matter with Commander Wegener and subsequent discussion with Army Group A, I proposed to Naval High Command that he should be appointed Staff Officer (Special Duties) attached to Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch at the same time acting as Naval Liaison Officer/Corps H.Q. (Special Duties) with Commanding Admiral, Kerch Strait.

Army Group A today requested direct traffic to Anapa as I suggested, however from Kerch and not from Theodosia as originally proposed. The two naval ferry barges intended for this purpose are at present in Theodosia and will be transferred to Kerch to be loaded there.

Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division reported that the Fuhrer directive stating that Army transport resources were not to be subordinate to Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch was based on information purporting that combined operations craft were responsible for 70% of the traffic and naval ferry barges for only 30%. In reply I submitted the following to Naval High Command and Group South:

- "1. The comparative figures cited cannot be examined in detail, however I do not doubt them.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. The small performance of the naval ferry barges may be attributed to
  - a. Their design, particularly their deep draft, which, except on rare occasions, precluded operations at the loading site at Kossa Chuchka while Taman Bay was ice-bound.
  - b. The insufficient number of troops and supplies prepared at the fish-salting works' loading site. The barges proceeded there as soon as the ice situation allowed, but owing to the bad condition of the roads to Taman the troops and supplies were not brought up in time, and the barges were not employed to capacity.
3. During the period of restricted activity due to ice, naval ferry barges were employed in
  - a. Minelaying operations.
  - b. Minesweeping operations.
  - c. Ferry service from south Crimean ports; transport of timber.
  - d. Readiness for special transport duties on behalf of Army H.Q. 17; as naval tugs to assist ice-breakers on the supply routes used by combined operations craft.
4. Tasks listed under fig. 3 contributed largely to the safe execution of the overall operation.
5. Thus the percentages quoted above do not give a true picture of the actual achievements or take any account of the different characteristics of the types of craft under ice conditions.

Admiral Black Sea Gkdos 1051 AI."

1900

FZ-group continued search south of Kossa Tuzla with two sets of sweeping gear; a non-contact mine was swept in 45° 13.6' N, 36° 29.2' E in 8 meters of water.

Search of the Pavlovski minefields, begun before the ice set in, was resumed by Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch; there were no mines swept.

CONFIDENTIAL

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

2000 Of the 12 naval ferry barges and 2 lighters which put out early this morning for Taman, 8 were loaded and began the return passage to Kerch. With the wind veering to the north they again encountered heavy drift ice and only 2 of them reached Kerch; the rest were ice-bound 2 miles from Taman. All the available tugs were used to free the ferry barges and 3 Siebel ferries stuck there.

Transportation figures for 21 February:

From west to east: 63 soldiers, 140 tons of stores, 57 tons of timber, 65 tons of stone, 1 tractor.

From east to west: 875 soldiers, 356 civilians, 121 prisoners, 89 lorries, 56 personnel trucks, 364 horses, 87 horse-drawn vehicles, 7 field kitchens.

The naval barges' share in these figures was:

- a. West-east: 29 soldiers, 140 tons of stores, 57 tons of timber, 65 tons of stone.
- b. East-west: 64 soldiers, 5 civilians, 3 lorries and 3 personnel trucks.

The small contribution of the Navy is due to the fact that the load carried by the ice-bound barges is not included.

All goods in readiness at the fish-salting works have now been removed. A new flow of goods is out of the question since there is no improvement in the roads. The barges will not go to the fish-salting works today.

Three naval ferry barges loaded with 220 tons of timber for building of landing stages in the Kerch Strait left Theodosia for Kerch today and 2 others proceeded with a similar load from Yalta to Theodosia.

2040 Observation post "Auerhahn" at Ivan Baba reported a submarine in 120° at a distance of 16 kilometers from the coast. Although the accuracy of this report is doubtful since, even by moonlight, it seems scarcely possible to sight a small vessel at such distance, I have issued orders that:

1. Two Italian E-boats will put out immediately from Theodosia on anti-submarine operations until early on 22 February. Operations are possible despite the bad weather as the high coast offers good shelter during the prevailing northwest wind.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 will sweep route Brown from Theodosia to Yalta with cutting kite sweep at dawn on 22 February.

Latterly Russian Air Force activity has diminished considerably. Apart from the adverse weather, I think that stronger anti-aircraft defense and the transfer of German fighter planes to the Crimea is responsible for this weakening.

Situation at the Novorossisk bridgehead unchanged.

CONFIDENTIAL

-72-

CONFIDENTIAL

(158)



CONFIDENTIAL

22 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the eastern Black Sea was only partial on account of the weather; no sighting reports. Adverse weather prevented observation of Poti and Batum. Usual shipping in the other ports. More coastal traffic than on previous days. Southeast of Tuapse 1 tanker of about 5,000-6,000 tons was identified, course 310°. Six miles southeast of Tuapse a freighter of about 4,000 tons seemed to have run aground. Another freighter of 2,000 tons, course northwest, lay between Gudant and Gagri. Two merchant ships and 2 patrol vessels were in Novorossisk Bay during the morning. Port Commander, Novorossisk also reported 2 large merchant ships of about 2,000 tons and patrol vessels off Myshako during the morning. These were probably the same ones reported by the Air Force. Radio traffic revealed no heavy surface forces. Three submarines were intercepted, central to western Black Sea, 2 in the sea area off the east coast and 3 in unknown position.

Own Situation:

Theodosia

0530 Italian E-boats 569, 575 put in after anti-submarine operations as ordered. Nothing to report.

Kerch

1200 Ferry barges F 142 and 469 put in to be loaded with supplies for Anapa. Transfer should take place on 23/24 February.

Since the passage from Kerch to Anapa and return, inclusive of the time spent loading and unloading in Anapa, cannot be undertaken within a single day and since barges cannot stay there overnight because of the danger from the repeated shelling, I have decided to organize the times of sailing so that they proceed past Cape Takil at dawn and stand off Takil again at dusk of the same day. Thus they will pass through the area most threatened by Russian M.T.B.s during daylight. The following orders have been issued with regard to this task:

"1. F 142 and 469 will transport urgently needed

CONFIDENTIAL

-73-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(159)

fuel supplies to Anapa and will take on 10.5 cm. ammunition there for Theodosia.

2. Details are:

- a. Loading to take place on arrival at Kerch on 22 February.
- b. Naval ferry barges will leave Kerch at about 1500 on 23 February and will anchor off Cape Takil at dusk.
- c. At 0500 on 24 February they will continue their passage via  $45^{\circ} 5' N$ ,  $36^{\circ} 28.5' E$  to  $45^{\circ} 6' N$ ,  $36^{\circ} 41' E$  to  $45^{\circ} 4' N$ ,  $36^{\circ} 47' E$  to  $45^{\circ} 3.5' N$ ,  $36^{\circ} 59' E$  to  $44^{\circ} 58.5' N$ ,  $37^{\circ} 13' E$  to Anapa.
- d. After unloading and taking in ammunition they will begin return passage to Theodosia by route as under 2 c. at 1400 at the latest.
- e. After passing Takil send radiogram to Port Commander, Theodosia requesting harbor light.
- f. The barges to be commanded by an officer. The Commander of 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will report name and number of the leading boat.
- g. Communications order: radio control by Naval Communications Officer, Kerch, transport frequency, code M.

3. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will ensure that

- a. all stations on the coast between Cape Tuzla and Anapa have full information,
- b. on approaching Anapa the naval ferry barges are directed to the appropriate unloading sites,
- c. loading and unloading are carried out expeditiously. Proper preparations must be made and, in particular, sufficient personnel provided for unloading.

4. 8th Air Corps and Air Force Staff, Crimea are requested

- a. to carry out reconnaissance from dawn

CONFIDENTIAL

on 24 February, planes to report enemy forces identified by "Most Immediate" radiogram while over sea, incoming sighting reports to be passed on immediately by telephone to Admiral, Black Sea,

- b. to provide fighter cover from about 1000 to 1400 on 24 February during loading and unloading at Anapa.
5. Commander, Don Flotilla will inform the commander of the formation and the barges regarding the mine situation at the southern approach to the Kerch Strait.
6. Secrecy during preparations must be ensured and caution observed in telephone conversation.
7. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to confirm.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos, 1070 AI."

1300 Weather: northwest wind, force 5, visibility good.

Operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla are out of the question during present conditions when the northwest wind causes persistent heavy swell. Since the forecast predicts a lull during the evening 1st E-Boat Flotilla has been ordered to stand by at immediate readiness after 1600 so that if necessary they can put out for operations against enemy supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik.

The ten naval ferry barges comprising the minelaying formation under the command of Commander, Don Flotilla, today laid the mine section K 3 between Cape Takil and Cape Panagiya. The minefield is situated from 45° 7.1' N, 36° 34' E to 45° 6.1' N, 36° 31.1' E, average distance between the mines 27 meters. 153 UMA mines and 116 explosive buoys were laid. The formation put in to Kerch at 1400 for reloading and to prepare for laying of section 3 (K2) which, weather permitting, will be laid on 23 February.

The FZ-group continued minesweeping with 2 sets of gear on the supply route south of Tuzla. A non-contact mine was swept in 45° 13.8' N, 36° 27.6' E. In view of recent successes I have ordered work to continue in spite of the numerous covering runs already made.

Minesweeping Ju has already made ten check

CONFIDENTIAL

flights covering a 200 meter broad strip along the eastern section of the route to within 3 kilometers east of the passage between Kossa Tuzla and Cape Tuzla, but no mines swept.

Yalta

1600 Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 put in after carrying out minesweeping operations as instructed from Brown 6 to Yalta; no mines swept.

Constantza

1800 E-boat S 51 reported ready for action; she put out for Iven Baba.

Novorossisk

1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight artillery and air activity on both sides during the day. Direct hits scored by artillery on the quarters of Port Commander 16. Lively shipping activity in Zemeskaya Bay and between Ghelenjik and Myshako. Type and size of the vessels could not be discerned owing to smoke screen. Situation in the southern infantry sector unchanged. All the dock installations at Novorossisk have been destroyed as ordered.

2110 The battery at Cape Takil sighted 2 low vessels on 135° 8,000 meters from the coast.

Theodosia

2200 Italian E-boat No. 570 put out on reconnaissance.

2200 Weather conditions have changed very little so that E-boat operations must still be deferred.

Russian Air Force activity again increased today. Thirty-eight bombs were dropped on Taman from 1715 to 1735, ten bombs at 1745. From 2300 on waves of planes attacked the town of Temriuk with high explosive and incendiary bombs; no damage reported.

Ferry traffic from Kerch to Taman:

95 bombs were dropped on the ice bar off Taman and a channel blasted, freeing the ferry barges which have been ice-bound there since 22 February. Twelve barges operated from west to east and 11 in the opposite direction. The barges leaving the fish-

CONFIDENTIAL

salting works were again not loaded to capacity today, as the poor condition of the roads remains unchanged. Combined operations craft were again out over the short passage from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka which the naval ferry barges cannot use on account of the shallow water. Results of transport operations today were as follows:

1. Total amount transported:

- a. East to west: 1,071 troops, 239 Cossacks, 319 civilians, 599 prisoners, 85 lorries, 61 personnel trucks, 384 horses, 95 horse-drawn vehicles, 4 field kitchens, 30 tons of military supplies.
- b. West to east: 1 lorry, 119 tons of ammunition, 70 tons of stone for building, 102 tons of military supplies, 86 tons of food stores.

2. Of this the Navy carried:

- a. East to west: 394 soldiers, 48 Cossacks, 25 lorries, 15 personnel trucks, 98 horses, 17 horse-drawn vehicles, 30 tons of food stores.
- b. West to east: all transport done by the Navy.

CONFIDENTIAL

23 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the central and southeastern Black Sea yielded no result; no enemy naval forces observed off the German-occupied coast. Two guard boats and 2 freighters of about 500-700 tons were identified in Novorossisk Bay. Port Commander, Novorossisk reported movement of shipping between Kabardinka and Myshako. Two transports of about 1,000 tons, 1 destroyer and various small craft were identified. The freighters were probably the same as those reported by the Air Force. Shipping at Ghelenjik and Tuapse is little changed, at Poti and Batum unchanged. In the Sukhum area there was 1 destroyer on a southerly course proceeding at high speed. South of Ghelenjik 2 medium-sized warships were at anchor. D/F Station intercepted 1 destroyer at 1810 in the sea area off Sochi and Tuapse. Three submarines were identified in the central to western Black Sea, 2 in the area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

- 0500 Italian E-boat No. 570 returned to Theodosia from her reconnaissance operation. Nothing sighted.
- 0905 Air attack on the convoy "Perovolyka", "Junak" escorted by 2 naval ferry barges took place on a level with Cape Sarich; attack failed.
- 1015 Attack on the same convoy was promptly driven off by anti-aircraft fire.
- In reply to a query U 9 reported full complement of torpedoes. Apparently she has not yet had occasion to attack.
- 0930 The weather forecast for the night of 23/24 February is wind westsouthwest, veering westnorthwest after midday, visibility 5-8 miles. 1st E-Boat Flotilla will attempt operations.

With the moon at its present phase the minelaying operation at Myshako is not yet possible. For the same reason the closely mined and heavily patrolled area between

CONFIDENTIAL

-78-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(164)

CONFIDENTIAL

Cape Doob and Myshako is not considered suitable for torpedo operations against supplies from Genichesk to the enemy bridge-head. The space required for such operations in bright moonlight can be found between Tuapse and Ghelenjik. Prospects here are regarded as favorable since supplies to Genichesk harbor, the jumping-off base, are at present transported in fairly large steamers.

Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to leave Ivan Baba at 1600 and to operate against this supply traffic immediately off the coast of Tuapse and Ghelenjik from 2100 until 0400 on 24 February.

1500 Naval ferry barges Nos. 142, 146 left Kerch for Anapa with 80 tons of fuel, 50 tons of grain fodder, 30 tons of ammunition for the Army (see War Diary, 22 February 1200).

Ferry operations in the Kerch Strait

The route between Kerch, the fish-salting works and Taman is ice-free. Ferry traffic was carried on by 18 naval ferry barges proceeding in both directions. Totals transported were:

- a. East to west: 1,625 (906) troops, 350 (15) prisoners, 388 (-) civilians, 43 (11) lorries, 51 (22) personnel trucks, 1,001 (376) horses, 230 (77) horse-drawn vehicles, 6 (-) field kitchens, 80 (45) tons of military supplies, 8 (3) motor cycles, 4 (4) ambulances.
- b. West to east: 287 (148) tons of supplies, 3 (-) searchlights.

(Figures in brackets denote the Navy's share of the total.)

Although Combined Operations contributed only 8 Siebel ferries and 2 landing craft, their share of the total was higher than the Navy's, since the route from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka is considerably shorter than that from Kerch to Taman, to which the naval ferry barges are assigned (2.3 miles compared with 14 miles). The barges cannot operate on the shorter route used by the combined operations craft because of the shallow water at the Kossa Chuchka landing stage.

The minelaying formation of naval ferry barges today laid the mine section K2. As a result of the swell and the drift the average distance between the mines became 18 meters instead of

CONFIDENTIAL

the 20 meters ordered. The last 10 mines of the section were duds which came to the surface and had to be shot up.

At 1030 three enemy planes, returning from a bombing raid on Taman, passed over the formation at an altitude of about 500 meters and at 1130 a reconnaissance plane flew over at about 4-5,000 meters. Since the ferry barges were undoubtedly sighted, air attacks with bombs and torpedoes must be expected. Hence on receipt of the radiogram from their commander, I requested fighter cover from the 8th Air Corps; this was promised.

The Commander, Don Flotilla was ordered to lay the last mine section, K 4, on 25 February and, as soon as this is done, to transfer the 10 naval ferry barges set aside for this purpose to Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch as reinforcement for their ferry service.

The FZ-group today swept the western part of the route south of Kossa Tuzla with 3 sets of gear. No mines swept.

The western part has now been swept on both sides of the line of buoys 22 times, the eastern part 12 times, with double breadth of sweep.

A minesweeping Ju plane today re-checked a 200 meter wide strip along the eastern part of the route to the fish-salting works south of Kossa Tuzla for standard mines. Ten covering runs yielded no result.

1820 According to an Air Force report of 22 February a steamer of about 4,000 tons is aground off the coast 6 miles southeast of Tuapse. The wash of the screws visible in an aerial photograph suggests that she is still fit to proceed and is attempting to get free under her own steam.

I have sent radio instructions to the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, now on operations between Ghelenjik and Tuapse, to detach 2 boats to torpedo the steamer.

2130 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in again at Ivan Baba. At 1715 the boats sighted and attacked an enemy submarine, probably of the "Schtsch" class, which surfaced in grid square CL 6184. The 6 torpedoes fired by the 3 E-boats missed and the attack was a complete failure. After the submarine had submerged, they proceeded

CONFIDENTIAL

-80-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(166)



CONFIDENTIAL

into their operational area as far as grid square CL 6436. There they found an increasingly heavy sea, force 4, and strong swell, and were obliged to return to Ivan Baba.

Air raids on Taman (15 bombs dropped) and the fish-salting works caused damage to a landing stage at both places and to a naval ferry barge in Taman. The jetties should be repaired by 24 February, the ferry barge in about 2 days.

The 8th Air Force reported that plans have been made for planes to lay non-contact mines in Ghelenjik Bay on the night of 23/24 February. In order that operations of our own and Italian E-boats off Ghelenjik should not be restricted I have requested that mine-laying should only take place within the line running from Cape Tonkiy to Cape Tolstoy. My request was granted by the 8th Air Force. Their plans to lay mines in Novorossisk Bay have been temporarily postponed in favor of mining of Genichesk Bay.

CONFIDENTIAL

-81-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(167)

CONFIDENTIAL

24 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance in the central Black Sea and off the German coast yielded no result. Only slight coastal traffic off the entire east coast. At 0920 a destroyer ten miles west of Gudant was proceeding at high speed to the northwest. The same destroyer was observed at 1312 fifteen miles south of Ghelenjik heading for that harbor. The harbors of Poti and Batum were not observed on account of the weather. According to radio traffic, no activity of larger units. The radio picture revealed 4 submarines in the western to central Black Sea and 2 in the sea area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0905 - An unsuccessful bombing attack near Cape  
1015 Sarich on the motor minesweeper convoy  
"Perevolyka/Erdey/Junak".

1125 The steamer convoy "Hainburg/Adelheid"  
escorted by "Ship 19" and ferry barge  
F 534, proceeding from Constantza to  
Sevastopol, was attacked by 2 enemy planes  
near Cape Lukull. They turned off after  
firing.

Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to put out at 1300 to torpedo the steamer beached southeast of Tuapse and still identified by today's morning reconnaissance in the same place (see War Diary, 1820 23 February). After completing this task they were instructed to operate until 0400 on 25 February against enemy supply traffic on a level with Cape Idokopas. Since U 9 is standing in the area between Tuapse and Ghelenjik anti-submarine operations were forbidden.

1400 E-boat S 51, approaching the operational area on passage to Ivan Baba, must be released on account of water in the fuel which is causing engine trouble. S 47 and S 26 will continue operations.

1900 S 102 left Ivan Baba for Constantza for engine overhaul. She is not fit for operations.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 were

CONFIDENTIAL

-82-

(168)

SECURITY INFORMATION

ordered to sweep route Brown from Yalta to Sevastopol with cutting kite sweep. This operation is to be used as an opportunity to escort the towed convoy "Perevolyka/Erdey/Junak" leaving Yalta for Sevastopol on 25 February.

Ferry operations in Kerch Strait

Ice conditions, favorable during the morning, deteriorated due to the north winds which drove heavy drift ice from the Sea of Azov into the Kerch Strait. During the afternoon Taman could only be reached with the help of tugs. If the same wind prevails, Taman and the fish-salting works will probably become completely blocked during the night.

Today 14 naval ferry barges were employed in traffic from east to west and vice-versa. Combined operations craft were used primarily on the route from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka: 22 Siebel ferries and 4 landing craft from west to east and 17 Siebel ferries and 4 landing craft from east to west.

Totals transported on 24 February were:

- a. East to west: 1,755 (599) troops, 350 (-) prisoners, 367 (7) civilians, 62 (23) lorries, 24 (1) personnel trucks, 7 (2) motor cycles, 441 (124) horse-drawn vehicles, 1,783 (590) horses, 10 (-) field kitchens, 20 tons (-) captured material.
- b. West to east: 110 (53) troops, 372 tons (28) military supplies, 3 (-) searchlights.

(Figures in brackets denote the Navy's share.)

Ferry barges F 142 and 469 today completed their transport operation to Anapa: nothing to report. At approximately 2000 the boats anchored off Cape Panagiya in order to proceed to Theodosia after daybreak on 25 February.

The minelaying formation of naval ferry barges had to break off the laying of section K 4 because of a strong breeze freshening from the northwest and a tide running across the minelaying course. On return passage to Kerch from the mining area F 143, carrying 34 inactive UMA mines, struck a mine on the coastal route south of Kerch near Eltingen and sank. The entire crew of 12 were lost.

Loss of F 143 means that, apart from explosive buoys, there are now only 102 UMA mines on 3 ferry barges available for laying of section

CONFIDENTIAL

K 4. I have decided to have the 3 mine carriers lay them on 25 February; the eastern half of the section is to consist of 2 rows of mines, average distance between the mines 20 meters, the western half to consist of one row, distance between the mines 40 meters.

The FZ-group swept the eastern part of the route south of Kossa Tuzla with 3 sets of gear and double breadth of sweep twice in both directions; no mines swept. On 25 February the FZ vessels have been ordered to operate on the coastal route Kamish-Burun-Eltingen as far as the northern edge of the Putrid Sea (site of the sinking of F 143).

Situation at the enemy bridgehead near Novorossisk unchanged. During the past night and in the course of the day enemy artillery fire on Novorossisk caused slight damage to naval quarters.

CONFIDENTIAL

-34-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(170)

CONFIDENTIAL

25 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the central Black Sea yielded no result. Night reconnaissance discovered 1 destroyer at 0135; course north-west, off Tuapse. Another destroyer was observed at midday, south of Batum, proceeding at high speed, course 360°. According to air reconnaissance, merchant shipping off the east coast is again increasing. South of Ghelenjik one 1,500-ton freighter proceeding southward, 10 miles south of Poti 1 merchant ship of about 4,000 tons on a northerly course. During the evening, northwest of Tuapse, immediately off the coast, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, not moving. In Ghelenjik harbor there were 2 warships, probably destroyers, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 1 of 1,000 tons; several coastal craft and about 10 other small craft. Shipping at Tuapse included 2 destroyers ("Frunse" and "Stotosevo" class), 1 motor minesweeper, 4 M.T.B.s, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons and 1 of 1,500 tons, 1 merchant ship of 2,500 tons sunk by the Air Force lying with her bows under water, 1 heavy crane and about 8 coastal vessels totaling approximately 3,000 tons. The battleship, 2 heavy cruisers and 2 cruiser hulls were seen at Poti, in addition 1 large and 4 medium freighters. Two large tankers were on Batum roads. At 0430 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 5 M.T.B.s, 2 destroyers, 2 freighters of about 1,000 tons, 2 tugs with 1 vessel each in tow and some patrol vessels off Myshako heading out to sea. These vessels were not intercepted by air reconnaissance. According to radio survey there was 1 unit, probably a destroyer, at 0930 in the sea area Sochi/Tuapse. Another destroyer was identified at 1040 in the sea area Tuapse. Main Naval D/F Station also detected increasing activity of small craft off the northern east coast. Four submarines were intercepted off the east coast, and 1 in the central to western Black Sea area.

Own Situation:

0740 E-boats S 47 and S 26 put in from their night operation. At 2134 on 24 February S 47 torpedoed the steamer aground in grid CL 9172 lower right hand corner. She was about 3,000 tons and guarded by 2 gunboats. After their attack the boats were caught in four coastal searchlights and came under fire from two medium

CONFIDENTIAL

-85-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(171)

CONFIDENTIAL

batteries. There was no damage or casualties. Their task performed they lay in wait off Cape Idokopas from 2300 to 0300. No shipping observed.

Theodosia

1030 Ferry barges F 142 and F 469 put in from Anapa. On their return passage they brought communications equipment and 10.5 cm. ammunition from Anapa to Theodosia.

Army Group A requested resumption of supplies to Anapa as soon as possible. Since, contrary to the Army Group's previous assurances, supplies were not made ready at Theodosia, F 142 and F 469 will have to move to Kerch for loading. Thus the task must be postponed by one day. Both the ferry barges were ordered to transfer from Theodosia to Kerch at dawn on 26 February.

1501 8th Air Force reported that according to photographic survey the freighter which had grounded on 22 February 6 miles south-east of Tuapse has put in to Ghelenjik. A second photograph revealed another freighter of about 2,000 tons, her bows under water, beached very close to the first. It seems that S 47 did not torpedo the grounded steamer but a freighter of about 2,000 tons which was proceeding immediately off the coast under escort by 2 gunboats. According to the photograph the steamer must be regarded as a total loss.

1655 U 9 reported that she is beginning her return passage from the operational area between Ghelenjik and Tuapse to Theodosia. I shall request 8th Air Force to forbid anti-submarine operations on her return route.

1900 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported lively artillery activity of both sides throughout the day. Naval quarters hit and damaged. Lively traffic between Kabardinka and Myshako. Accurate observation was prevented by smoke cover. At about 0430 5 E-boats, 2 destroyers and 2 freighters of approximately 1,000 tons were observed off Myshako. The situation at the enemy bridgehead is unchanged.

Simferopol

2000 Twenty-two naval ferry barges were today employed in traffic across the Kerch Strait;

CONFIDENTIAL

-86-

WARTY INFORMACIJA

(172)

they made the passage west to east 22 times and east to west 11 times. Ice difficulties, particularly off Taman, impeded and restricted traffic again today and affected results. The landing stages at Taman and the fish-salting works could only be reached with the help of tugs as icebreakers. Ice conditions, which were moderately favorable during the morning, deteriorated during the afternoon as a result of north to northeasterly winds which drove further masses of ice into Taman Bay.

The Russian Air Force continued its attacks on Taman and the fish salting works without doing damage to any of the vessels. Totals transported today were:

- a. East to west: 1,223 (378) troops, 171 (8) prisoners, 172 (-) civilians, 96 (11) lorries, 48 (9) personnel trucks, 7 (1) motor cycles, 140 (110) horse-drawn vehicles, 477 (467) horses, 4 (2) field kitchens, 2 (2) field bakeries, 21 (2) trailers.
- b. West to east: 80 (44) troops, 86 (56) tons of military supplies.

(Naval figures in brackets.)

2200

Port Commander, Kerch reported a plane 1 kilometer south of Durande (between Cape Chauda and Cape Takil) at an altitude of 200 meters. She was seen to drop objects which subsequently exploded.

Since the mine-free route between Cape Chauda and Cape Takil south of Durande goes through water 25-30 meters deep, there should be no hesitation about allowing ferry barges F 142 and F 469 to proceed on 27 February from Theodosia to Kerch.

After loss of F 143, mine section K 4 was today laid as ordered. (See War Diary, 24 February.)

Thus the southern approach to the Kerch Strait has been mined as ordered. Mine-fields so far laid will be strengthened as far as the general situation and the provision of necessary mines permits.

Enemy planes dropped 8 bombs on the minelaying formation while it was on its outward passage. The planes were at a great height and had no success. Before start of the minelaying enemy planes again flew over the formation. During

CONFIDENTIAL

minelaying no planes were sighted. Nevertheless, laying of the minefields has probably been detected by enemy reconnaissance planes and bombers which repeatedly flew over the formation on 24, 25 and 26 February. The effectiveness of the minefields as a defense is not however diminished or impaired in any way.

On the return passage there were renewed attacks by 3-engined planes using bombs and machine-guns. Ferry barge F 372 sustained slight damage, gunfire caused casualties among the anti-aircraft crew; 1 man killed, 2 injured.

The coastal route from Kamish Burun to the Sivash was swept 5 times with towed loop gear with double breadth of sweep both sides of the line of buoys; no mines swept. FZ-boat No. 29 sustained slight damage to the upper deck from splinters during a bombing attack.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 swept the route from Yalta to Sevastopol with cutting kite sweep. No mines swept.

Apart from raids on the formations in Kerch Strait from 1740 until 1815 today, waves of planes came in to attack Kerch, concentrating on the unloading stages (the Kolonka and Ak Burun railway jetties). At 2245 nine bombs were dropped on Taman and at 2400 six more. No damage to naval installations or ships reported.

CONFIDENTIAL

-38-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(174)



CONFIDENTIAL

26 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Today's reconnaissance of the German-occupied coast and the central Black Sea was not exhaustive owing to poor visibility in places. A submarine was sighted about 25 miles southwest of Eupatoria. The reconnaissance of the east coast harbors did not go beyond Adler; weather conditions prevented observation of the remaining harbors as far as Batum. There were some 5,000 tons of merchant shipping at Ghelenjik, in Tuapse some 10,000 tons, also tankers amounting to 7,000 tons, minesweepers and E-boats. During the early hours of the night some motor boats were intercepted by night reconnaissance about 60 miles south of Cape Chauda. Off the mouth of the Chubka were 2 merchant ships of 1,000 tons and patrol vessels making northwest and southeast. At 1540 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 destroyer, presumably on a northwesterly course in the sea area Gudant-Adler. At 1655 an unknown unit with the Commanding Admiral, Light Forces on board was identified south of Tuapse. Furthermore, Main Naval D/F Station detected radio traffic from surface forces and increasing submarine activity. Six submarines were intercepted off the east coast, 1 of them on return passage. Another 7 submarines, 5 of them on the outward passage, were in the central to western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0930 Meteorological Station, Simferopol forecast light variable winds from east to north, visibility 3-5 miles, for the coming night.

In view of such conditions I have decided to issue orders for the minelaying off the coast near Cape Myshako which was already planned before the start of the full moon period. The weather is also unsuitable for the Italian E-boats. Since the 1st E-Boat Flotilla is tonight operating in the area between Ghelenjik and Novorossisk recently assigned to Italian E-boats, the latter will have to transfer their attack area farther to the southeast between Tuapse and Ghelenjik. This means that the long approach route must be risked.

1st E-Boat Flotilla has been ordered to put out 3 boats (it is impossible to construct mine

CONFIDENTIAL

-89-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(175)

CONFIDENTIAL

rails on the fourth boat) from Ivan Baba at 1600 and, having laid the minefield between Myshako and Cape Tolstoy, to operate against enemy transports leaving Ghelenjik for Novorossisk Bay.

Italian E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to send 4 boats against enemy shipping between Tuapse and Ghelenjik, putting out from Theodosia at 1500 and remaining in the operational area until 0400 on 27 February.

Theodosia

1000 U 9 put in from her third offensive. She put out from Theodosia on 6 February, remained in the patrol line south of the Kerch Strait and off Novorossisk from 6-10 February, in the attack area off the coast between Cape Idokopas and Cape Olginskaya from 10-25 February. A destroyer passed through the area on each of the days 13, 15 and 17 February. Attack was impossible because the range was too great. The boat was mostly forced to submerge during the day because of the heavy air patrols. By night she operated on coastal traffic as far as the 100 meter line. No shipping was observed.

Air reconnaissance and prisoners' statements show that there is continual supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik/Novorossisk. That U 9 did not observe or engage such traffic is explained by the fact that by day air patrol compelled her to submerge and by night, from her position on the 100-meter line, which runs on an average 3-4 miles offshore she could not detect ships proceeding immediately off the coast.

I shall have to give up my plan to refuel U 9 and then send her on another 5 or 6 days' operations off the coast between Tuapse and Ghelenjik, because she has only sufficient potash cartridges and oxygen on board for two days, the echo-sounding set is out of action and the gyro-compass is not working satisfactorily. However, she can undertake a brief operation before her release to Constantze for overhaul. For this purpose the operational area south of Anapa would appear to be suitable since during recent nights that port has been shelled from the sea with guns of medium caliber (presumably destroyers). The last bombardment took place on the night of 23/24 February after naval ferry barges had put in there on 23

CONFIDENTIAL

-90-

CONFIDENTIAL

(176)

CONFIDENTIAL

February. Since they will again put in on 28 February I am expecting another bombardment on the following night.

U 9 received orders to leave Theodosia at 0900 on 27 February and from that evening until the morning of 1 March to occupy the patrol line west of Cape Utrish. On the night of 28 February/1 March she is to probe north as far as the mine situation off Anapa permits. She is to return to Constantza on 1 March.

Ferry barges F 142 and 469 were ordered to carry out the second transport operation with supplies from Kerch to Anapa. Plan and timetable as in my orders for the first operation (see War Diary under 22 February).

1720 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 received orders to sweep route Brown from Sevastopol to Theodosia with cutting kite sweep at daybreak on 27 February. They will also escort the steamer "Grafenau", intended for Special Transport Staff, Kerch, to Theodosia.

1750 1st E-Boat Flotilla broke off their passage to the operational area on account of increasingly heavy sea, as owing to the weight of the mines there was danger that the boats might capsize and the mine rails be torn from their sockets on the deck. On the return passage the flotilla sighted a small submarine in grid square 6188. The boat had dived before recognition signals could be exchanged. In order to take the mines on board, the depth charges had had to be left behind and there was thus no means of attack. The Flotilla Commander did not care to attack while the boat was still surfaced, as without a recognition signal he was uncertain whether she was friend or foe. It should be noted here that my orders did not contain the ban on anti-submarine operations usual when German U-boats are at sea.

Ferry traffic in the Kerch Strait was again attacked today by Russian planes. In a low-flying attack with bombs and machine-guns ferry barge F 176 received a direct hit on the stern. Her ammunition exploded causing heavy damage and she must meantime be regarded as a total loss. Eight injured.

F 372 sustained slight damage from air attack; 1 killed, 2 wounded.

F 471 detonated a mine at a distance of 10 meters on the route between Kerch and the fish-salting works. No damage or casualties.

CONFIDENTIAL

One heavy combined operations ferry was badly damaged near Kossa Chuchka by an exploding mine.

Today 19 naval ferry barges made the passage in both directions. Totals transported were:

East to west: 1,576 (683) troops, 404 (227) Turkish soldiers, 490 (-) prisoners, 289 (21) civilians, 104 (26) lorries, 26 (18) personnel trucks, 1,286 (655) horses, 306 (170) horse-drawn vehicles, 3 (1) field kitchens, 2 (2) trailers, 23 (23) wounded, 1 (1) anti-tank gun, 26 (26) cattle, 50 (50) tons of military supplies.

West to east: 100 (79) troops, 140 (140) cases of ammunition, 220 (220) tons of timber, 96 (96) tons of food stores, 50 (50) tons of military supplies, 10 (10) tons of coal.

(Navy's share shown in brackets.)

FZ-group, using 2 sets of gear, swept the coastal route from Pavlovski to Takil; no mines.

Following P 471's minesweeping success, a minesweeping Ju plane checked the route northeast of Kossa Tuzla; twenty covering runs revealed no mines.

Situation at Novorossisk unchanged.

CONFIDENTIAL

-9-92-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(178)

CONFIDENTIAL

27 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No enemy forces were sighted by reconnaissance in the central and southeastern Black Sea. Reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast was hindered by low cloud. Shipping at Ghelenjik was little changed by comparison with the previous day; owing to adverse weather the other harbors were not, or only partly, examined. At Poti the battleship, 2 heavy cruisers, 1 of them in dock, 3 destroyers, "Charkov" probably among them, 2 heavy cruiser hulls, several motor minesweepers, submarines and M.T.B.s, also 31,500 tons of merchant shipping were discovered. At Batum, which was only partially examined, 1 cruiser, probably "Voroshilov", 1 light cruiser, 1 passenger ship and several small and medium-sized merchant ships were observed. On Batum roads there were 4 tankers totaling about 24,000 tons, in the sea area off Batum 1 freighter of 4,000 tons on a northerly course. Usual shipping in Tuapse harbor. In the Tuapse area 1 merchant ship of about 1,000 tons on course 130° and 3 M.T.B.s proceeding at high speed. During the morning there were 7 M.T.B.s, proceeding at high speed on a northwesterly course, in the Gudant area. At 1700 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 3 merchant ships, each approximately 1,000 tons, heading for Kabardinka behind a smoke screen. Main Naval D/F Station located 1 submarine 45 miles north of Cape Ince Burun at 2145, probably making for the north. Off the east coast the D/F Station intercepted minesweepers and small craft. Radio traffic revealed no activity of heavy units. Radio intelligence intercepted 2 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

- 0820 Italian E-boats returned from operations between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. From 2100 to 0400 two boats stood between Ghelenjik and Cape Idokopas and 2 between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse. Despite good visibility no enemy traffic was observed apart from 1 auxiliary sailing vessel southeast of Cape Idokopas heading for Tuapse. On the return passage planes dropped bombs and fired on the boats west of Cape Utrish without success.
- 0850 U 9 put out as instructed (see War Diary, 26 February 1000).

CONFIDENTIAL

-93-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(179)

CONFIDENTIAL

- 0930 Light winds are forecast for the coming night by Meteorological Station, Simferopol. I have therefore ordered 1st E-Boat Flotilla to carry out the operations broken off the previous night. Recent experience has shown that even good weather in the open sea area south of the Kerch Strait does not prevent local disturbances forcing the E-boats, loaded with mines and particularly sensitive to surface conditions, to turn back. I have therefore ordered the flotilla to proceed immediately off the Crimean and Taman coast to the operational area and have taken care to inform all coastal stations of their passage. Having completed minelaying operations the flotilla will operate southeast of Ghelenjik against enemy supply traffic.
- 0945 An enemy plane dropped 3 bombs and fired on a towed convoy, under escort by ferry barges F 532 and F 534, near Cape Sarich. No damage sustained; German defensive gunfire unsuccessful.
- 1230 Harbor defense boat RO 33 of the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Ochakov sank during mine-sweeping off Koblevo as a result of a fire which started in her carburettor. Crew saved, 2 injured.
- 1343 Three Russian bombers dropped 6 well-placed bombs from a medium height on E-boats putting out for operations. No damage or casualties.
- 1500 F 142 and F 469 left Kerch for Anapa, carrying 118 tons of petrol and 52 tons of ammunition. At dusk they anchored off Cape Takil and will proceed to Anapa on 28 February.

Ferry traffic across the Kerch Strait:

The Russian Air Force continued its attacks on German supply traffic in the Kerch Strait. F 535 was badly damaged during a raid on the fish salting works, bombs scored direct hits on her side. Casualties amongst the crew were 1 killed, 2 badly and 2 slightly injured. Of the troops embarked there were 9 killed, 13 wounded. In addition 16 horses were killed or wounded.

Repeated air raids on Kerch, Taman and the fish-salting works have not done any damage to naval installations.

Ice conditions have slightly improved with temperatures about 0° (C). Traffic was able to proceed unhindered. Twenty-two naval ferry barges were used today but there

CONFIDENTIAL

-94-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(180)

CONFIDENTIAL

were not enough troops for them to be fully loaded.

Totals transported were:

East to west: 1,712 (670) troops, 1,001 (-) prisoners, 413 (9) civilians, 149 (48) lorries, 53 (17) personnel trucks, 1,225 (366) horses, 311 (102) horse-drawn vehicles, 2 (2) field kitchens, 6 (6) trailers, 2 (2) tractors, 19 (-) motor cycles, 10 (-) guns, 3 (3) omnibuses, 1 (1) radio car, 171 (171) wounded.

West to east: 46 (21) troops, 381 (197) tons of supplies.

(Brackets denote the Navy's share.)

The FZ-group, using 2 sets of gear on the route south of Kossa Tuzla, swept 1 mine in 45° 13.8' N, 36° 28.3' E and 1 in 45° 13.8' N, 36° 28.5' E with towed loop gear.

Last night Russian planes were observed to drop two objects near the supply route north of Kossa Tuzla. It is assumed that these were mines. Minesweeping plane made 10 covering runs during check-sweep but swept no mines. Five naval ferry barges will be posted to the route from Kerch to Taman during the coming night to watch and fix the positions of mines dropped. This measure is to remain in force.

Minesweeping of the Pavlovski minefield by Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch had to be broken off on account of drift ice.

CONFIDENTIAL

-95-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(181)

CONFIDENTIAL

28 February, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Owing to adverse weather, reconnaissance in the central and southeastern Black Sea was without result. Night reconnaissance planes equipped with Lichtenstein gear did not intercept any enemy forces between Sukhum and Tuapse or in the area south of Cape Sarich. At the Novorossisk bridgehead a freighter was identified on the beach. This will probably be one of the steamers torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla. Ghelenjik and Tuapse were only partially observed, usual shipping. Heavy ships were identified in Poti. Batum harbor was not examined, 3 tankers, each 6,000 tons, and 1 freighter 4,000 tons on Batum roads. Northwest of Poti a convoy with a freighter of about 3,000 tons, a minesweeper and a patrol vessel on a northeasterly course. Otherwise only coastal vessels and patrol activity off the east coast. According to D/F report there was 1 destroyer in the area off Tuapse at 1555, at 1810 another destroyer was identified off the central east coast, presumably on a southeasterly course. Further, according to D/F Station, radio traffic revealed activity of E-boats, minesweepers and patrol vessels. Seven submarines were located at sea, 6 of them probably in the central to western Black Sea and 1 in the sea area off the east coast. At midday enemy air reconnaissance as far as the northwestern Black Sea was working with the Submarine Command Station at Batum.

Own Situation:

0345 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Theodosia for refuel. After proceeding by the prescribed route, immediately off the Crimean and Taman coast, the flotilla stood in their operational area between Myshako and Suchuk at about 2000. Off Myshako the E-boats attacked enemy units moored there for unloading and succeeded in sinking 1 torpedoboat, 1 steamer of 2,500 G.R.T., 1 steamer of 1,200 G.R.T. and 1 coastal vessel of some 800 tons. The torpedoboat was hit three times and sank. Evidence of explosions was seen. Heavy explosions on board the coastal vessel suggest that she was carrying ammunition. No other valuable targets were encountered.

Subsequently the flotilla laid the UMB

CONFIDENTIAL

-96-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(132)



CONFIDENTIAL

minefield as ordered on the approach route of enemy supply vessels to the unloading stage at Myshako. Position of the minefield: from 44° 39' 25" N, 37° 49' 30" E to 44° 38' 36" N, 37° 49' 30" E to 44° 38' 14" N, 37° 49' 12" E. Depth setting minus 1 meter.

My orders ran that the minefield must be laid "off Myshako parallel to and as close to the coast as possible" in order to seal off the landing stage from the sea. On their approach to lay the minefield, however, 1st E-Boat Flotilla encountered the enemy vessels with escort of patrol vessels off Myshako. After the torpedoboat and the transports were torpedoed, enemy patrols remained in that area, thus compelling the Flotilla Commander to lay the minefield farther to the east, south of Suchuk. As minelaying began he sighted a M.T.B. approaching from the west and forcing his boats to move farther up to avoid observation. Thus the minefield became broken up and mines were laid at an average interval of 100 meters instead of 50 meters. The minefield is at right angles to the approach route of transports coming to the unloading stage from the Ghelenjik direction and thus offers good prospects of success, though the position proposed in an oblique line in front of the landing stage would have been even better. Moreover the present position of the minefield will restrict the freedom of movement of German E-boats in future operations off Novorossisk Bay.

Having completed the minelaying task and expended their torpedoes the flotilla turned back.

0700 Ferry barges F 142 and F 469 put in to Anapa.

1200 The ferry barges returned to Kerch loaded with 100 bales of cotton, 4 lorries and 10.5 cm. ammunition.

The position north of Kossa Tuzla where mines were seen to drop (see War Diary, 27 February) was checked again today by minesweeping plane. Thirty covering runs revealed no mines.

In accordance with orders U 9 will return early on 1 March from the patrol line south of Anapa to Constantza. I have therefore requested 8th Air Force to stop anti-submarine operations on her return route as from 0600 of 1 March.

1400 Good weather may again be expected during the coming night. Since according to the general weather situation a change is expected shortly,

CONFIDENTIAL

-97-

SECURITY INFORMATION

(183)

CONFIDENTIAL

I have ordered 1st E-Boat Flotilla to repeat operations tonight. The Italian E-boats are also ordered out. As they have only a limited action radius, I have assigned them to the area off the coast between Oereika and Suchuk (unloading stage for Myshako). The 1st E-Boat Flotilla is to operate against enemy supply traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse.

Orders were issued to the Italian E-Boat Flotilla to put out with 4 boats from Theodosia at 1500 by the route taken yesterday by 1st E-Boat Flotilla, return to base at 0400 by the route south of the enemy danger areas off the Kerch Strait.

At 1600 1st E-Boat Flotilla left Ivan Baba with instructions to put in again at approximately 0900 on 1 March. The flotillas have all been informed of the operations and of the position of U 9 in the patrol line west of Utrish.

U 9 has been advised of the passage of Italian E-boats through the patrol line between 1800 and 2000 and of the return of the flotillas early on 1 March.

1424 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported:

1. Guns of the "Breslau" battery, with one exception, blown up since all ammunition expended.
2. 50 specialists and sick men have been withdrawn from Port Commander's platoons in the Infantry Sector.

1430 Port Commander, Taman took over the new mooring jetty built by the Army. This ensures a larger and more efficient transshipment at Taman.

1625 Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 put in to Theodosia after acting as minesweeper escort for "Grafenau". No mines swept.

Before transfer of "Grafenau" to Kerch I ordered checksweep of route Brown between Theodosia and Cape Takil, where low-flying enemy planes have been observed and minelaying may be expected. I shall not have the route searched for non-contact mines, since in depths of 25-30 meters there is no danger to a ship with degaussing protection.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and 163 received

CONFIDENTIAL

-98-

CONFIDENTIAL

(184)

CONFIDENTIAL

orders to sweep route Brown from point 13 to point 17 and back with cutting kite sweep on 1 March.

Ferry Operations:

No real obstruction by ice on the route Kerch-Taman-fish-salting works. Hence, of the 25 naval ferry barges employed today, 6 were able to make the passage three times. Enemy Air Force activity only slight, so no damage sustained today. Totals transported on 28 February were:

East to west: 2,852 (1,419) troops, 884 (211) prisoners, 120 (37) civilians, 197 (64) lorries, 62 (32) personnel trucks, 1,278 (915) horses, 291 (249) horse-drawn vehicles, 5 (-) guns, 6 (1) field kitchens, 4 (4) trailers, 2 (2) tractors, 7 (7) camels, 27 (27) oxen, 736 (736) empty cases.

West to east: 57 (28) soldiers, 250 (162) tons of supplies.

(Bracketed figures denote Navy's share.)

(Signed) Kieseritzki.



CONFIDENTIAL

1 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of the central and south-eastern Black Sea was prevented by the weather. During the forenoon an exploratory reconnaissance detected 1 warship, presumably a destroyer or a cruiser, on an easterly course, 6 miles east of Yasun Burun. Weather conditions also hampered coastal reconnaissance. When compared with yesterday, insofar as could be ascertained, there appeared little change in the shipping in harbor. Off Sochi, 2 merchant ships of up to 1,000 tons, south of Gagri 1 merchant ship of about 2,000 tons, course northwest. Batum roads, 3 tankers each of 7,000 tons and 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons. Otherwise only small patrol vessels, freighters and E-boats were active off the southern and central east coast.

During the morning, according to Port Commander, Novorossiisk there were only 2 freighters of about 2,000 tons and 1 patrol vessel off Myshako heading for the sea. (The observation, made by untrained Army personnel, is hard to believe, at least insofar as the size of the vessels is concerned.) According to the D/F Station, in the radio picture there were 2 destroyers during the morning and 1 destroyer during the evening. Radio traffic revealed no other activity of heavier surface vessels. Apart from lively traffic of small craft only one submarine was intercepted off the east coast and in the central and western Black Sea. This morning Naval Air Force planes were again cooperating with the Submarine Command Station at Batum.

Own Situation:

- 0600 In accordance with orders U 9 set out on her return passage from the patrol line west of Cape Utrish for Constantza.
- 0700 Four Italian E-boats put in to Theodosia from the patrol line between Osercika and Suchuk. While making for their operational area the Italian boats sighted 6 Russian M.T.B.s near Cape Utrishenk. These attached themselves to the Italian formation for some time, probably thinking they were Russian. By increasing their speed the Italians succeeded, however, in shaking off the enemy and avoiding an engagement. No supply traffic or patrols were

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-1-

186

CONFIDENTIAL

encountered between Osereika and Suchuk and no ships at anchor by the landing stage at Myshako. At approximately 0300 the E-boats commenced their return passage.

Operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla near Cape Idokopas were likewise without result. From 2130 to 0316 the boats were in lurking position off the coast. No shipping or patrol activity was observed.

- 0710 Naval ferry barges F 142 and F 469 on their second transport operation returned to Kerch from Anapa. Nothing to report.
- 0900 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Theodosia to refuel.
- 1120 According to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus the situation near Novorossisk is unchanged. Planes bombed and machine-gunned Anapa on 28 February one hour after F 142 and F 469 had left. No damage reported.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 1400):

W to SW winds, force 4 - 5, in the coming night. Operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats were therefore canceled.

- 1900 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 swept route Brown from Theodosia to Cape Takil. No mines swept. The boats were then ordered to provide a minesweeper escort for the "Grafenau" from Theodosia via route Brown to Cape Takil on 2 March and there at 1100 to hand her over to two FZ-groups which will escort her to Kerch on their sweep for ground mines.

E-boats S 40 and S 52, ice-bound in the Danube north of Braila are now free and have put in to Braila. On the completion of minor repairs they will proceed to Constantza.

Now that her engines have been overhauled, E-boat S 72 reported ready for action. As soon as weather permits, she will be transferred to Ivan Baba.

FZ-group swept the route south of Kossa Tuzla with 3 sets of gear. No mines swept.

Combined operations craft between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka exploded 2 mines. One mine exploded 10 meters away, causing no damage, but the second one seriously damaged another landing craft which was, however, successfully towed in to Yenikale.

CONFIDENTIAL

Before resuming ferry traffic from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka the route was thoroughly searched by a minesweeping plane. No mines swept. The mines which exploded today must have either been recently dropped by Russian planes or else they are a type of mine which cannot be swept by plane (e.g. acoustic mines). A minesweeping plane was at once employed to check the route but no other mines were swept. (The route cannot be checked with towed loop gear because the water is too shallow.) Although acoustic mines have never been found in the Black Sea and there is no evidence that they have been used by the Russians, orders to check the route with cracker equipment have been issued for 2 March.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic to Taman and the fish-salting works proceeded today without being obstructed by the ice. Moreover there were no enemy air attacks and hence no delays, so that the 25 naval ferry barges employed made the passage 64 times in both directions.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 3,292 (1,775) men, 617 (11) prisoners,  
807 (437) civilians, 256 (136)  
lorries, 84 (31) personnel vehicles,  
9 (-) trailers, 19 (5) guns,  
13 (4) motor-cycles, 6 (-) field-  
kitchens, 2,111 (1,296) horses,  
486 (269) horse-drawn vehicles.

West-East: 21 (21) soldiers, 2 (2) lorries,  
397 (341) tons of Army supplies,  
1 heavy anti-aircraft battery and  
1 platoon of light anti-aircraft.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

CONFIDENTIAL

2 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance west and south of the Crimea as far as the Turkish coast revealed no shipping apart from 1 freighter off the Turkish coast. Poor visibility hampered reconnaissance of the northeastern Black Sea as far as Ochemchiri. Five miles northwest of Sochi on an eastsoutheasterly course, there were 2 patrol vessels with a tanker of about 2,000 tons. Shipping in port at Batum included 1 tanker of approximately 3,000 tons on the roads, 2 cruisers in port, 2 destroyers, 3 tankers of 6 - 7,000 tons each and some 10 merchant ships totaling 20,000 tons.

At 2215 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 3 boats off Cape Doob picked up by Russian searchlights.

Main Naval D/E Station intercepted 1 destroyer off the central east coast in the early hours of the morning. Otherwise radio traffic detected no heavy vessels. Two submarines were located off the east coast, another in the central to western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0700 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 left Theodosia for Takil as a minesweeper escort for the "Grafenau". South of Cape Kys Aul R 165 cut a small Russian moored mine. From its appearance it must have only recently been laid. It was obviously an aircraft mine, presumably dropped by the low-flying Russian plane observed between Cape Chauda and Cape Takil on 25 February, and that is why I ordered a minesweeper escort for the "Grafenau".

Weather forecast:

0930 Off the south coast of the Crimea and the Caucasus coast SW winds, force 4 - 5, veering during the evening from W to NW up to force 6.

Operations of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats against enemy traffic are therefore out of the question during the coming night.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

1100 The 2 motor minesweepers handed over "Grafenau" to the 2nd FZ-group for them to take her on to Kerch. The motor minesweepers returned to Theodosia streaming their sweeps. No mines were swept. I ordered the 2 boats to sweep route Brown again on 2 March from Cape Chauda to Cape Takil and back with oropesa gear and to search the position where the mine was cut to within a radius of 500 meters.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The route Kerch-Taman-fish-salting works is completely ice-free. It was therefore possible today to increase transportation again and, by using 31 naval ferry barges, to make the passage 80 times. The approach roads to Taman and the fish-salting works are deep in mud as a result of thaw and showers; this so hampers the bringing up of troops and vehicles that some of the available ferry barges could not be fully utilized. Enemy air attacks did not interfere with the ferry traffic, probably owing to the weather.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,216 (1,250) men, 510 (80) prisoners, 471 (98) civilians, 192 (155) wounded, 257 (154) lorries, 67 (50) personnel vehicles, 1,658 (605) horses, 365 (172) horse-drawn vehicles, 20 (-) trailers, 4 (-) field kitchens, 50 (50) tons of Army supplies.

West-East: 100 (63) soldiers, 1,176 (969) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

8th Air Corps informed us that reports of Army Observation posts on movements of naval and merchant vessels in the Kabardinka inlet of Novorossisk Bay, the Russian bridgehead and sea area off Anapa proved, on being immediately checked by air reconnaissance, to be nearly always inaccurate.

This confirms my view on the unreliability of Army reports expressed in War Diary, 1 March, Enemy Situation.

The fairway in to Ghelonjik Bay has been mined by the 8th Air Corps according to plan. (See also War Diary, 23 February.)

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

3 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Routine daily reconnaissance over the eastern Black Sea produced no results despite good visibility. Air reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast had to be broken off because of the weather and atmospheric conditions. Owing to poor visibility (approx. 2 kilometers) a second plane did not take off. Using Lichtenstein gear, air reconnaissance located several small vessels at 0220 in grid square 6530, at 0315 in grid square 4540 and at 0340 in grid square 4450.

These reports are hard to believe since it is unlikely that small vessels would be at sea in the weather that we are having at present.

The heavy seas would make landing operations on the open coast impossible. I am therefore not taking any special measures on the basis of these reports.

Early this morning Main Naval D/F Station Constantza intercepted the destroyer identified yesterday off the central east coast, this time in the northeastern Black Sea transmitting a short signal to Ghelenjik. Otherwise the radio picture revealed no activity of the larger surface forces. Five submarines were identified at sea, 3 of them probably in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0930 There is a depression extending across the whole of the Black Sea causing SW winds up to force 7 which will later veer from W to NW up to gale force 8.

As a result the convoy ordered to sail from Sevastopol to Constantza, timber transports off the Crimean coast, supply traffic to Anapa and minesweeping of Kerch Strait and between Theodosia and Cape Takil had provisionally to be postponed 24 hours.

Ferry traffic from Kerch to Taman was temporarily maintained with great difficulty.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

1145 U 9 put in to Constantza. No report of the operation since her departure from Theodosia on 27 February has as yet been received.

1450 8th Air Corps reported that ice-floes were sighted in the area where night reconnaissance claimed to have located small vessels; this explains the incorrect reports.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported situation unchanged off Novorossisk with slight gunfire. The destruction of harbor installations was continued jointly with the 73rd Infantry Division. Supplies of mines, depth charges and explosives have been exhausted.

2100 The heavy seas in Anapa Bay complicated and severely delayed the mooring of naval ferry barges at the fish-salting works and Anapa. Hence 26 naval ferry barges were only able to make the passage 45 times.

The fish-salting works and Anapa continue to be ice-free but there is still a covering of fast ice in Senaya Bay. Road conditions have deteriorated as a result of thaw and rain, so that motor transport vehicles cannot be used at all and horse-drawn vehicles only with extreme difficulty.

Difficult conditions meant that transportation figures for the day were only:

East-West: 1,952 (767) men, 207 (84) prisoners, 337 (127) civilians, 69 (9) lorries, 24 (1) personnel vehicles, 1,454 (916) horses, 297 (187) horse-drawn vehicles, 10 (-) field kitchens, 12 (4) guns, 28 (28) tons of Army supplies, 150 (150) bales of cotton (540) barrels, 10 (-) motor cycles.

West-East: 75 (75) soldiers, 2 (-) anti-aircraft batteries, 446 (340) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

CONFIDENTIAL

4 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted no enemy forces either in the central Black Sea and west of the Crimea, where visibility was about 40 meters, or in the southeastern Black Sea in changing visibility. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors was only possible as far as Tuapse because of the weather. Some small craft and 1 submarine were sighted in the north-eastern Black Sea. 1210 Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 gunboat heading for Kabardinka, and at 1550 two further vessels were observed towards the headland. Apart from small craft, Main Naval D/F Station intercepted no surface vessels off the east coast. Six submarines were identified at sea by radio intercept service, 2 of them in the central to western Black Sea and 4 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0600 The situation at the bridgehead south of Novorossisk continues unchanged. No shipping movements were observed. During the night which was quiet on the whole, gunfire on the town was only slight.

0930 No change in the weather. According to the Meteorological Station, Simferopol northerly winds, force 7, must be expected to continue off the south coast of the Crimea and the north coast of the Caucasus.

The resumption of convoy traffic, transportation by naval ferry barge immediately off the Crimean coast and to Anapa, minesweeping in Kerch Strait and E-boat operations had to be postponed for another 24 hours.

In a strong north wind Lighter No. 1242 ran aground in Kherson Bay with a load of cement for the construction of a battery near Cape Kherson. Salvage measures in hand.

2000 Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait was again handicapped by the weather, particularly by the high sea caused in Taman Bay by the north wind. Five naval ferry barges at the landing stage at the fish-salting works and the bridge were slightly damaged in the heavy seas. In order to avoid further damage, traffic was stopped during the afternoon and only 19 crossings were made.

CONFIDENTIAL

-8-

193

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 1,436 (314) men, 181 (-) prisoners, 312 (89) civilians, 84 (41) lorries, 9 (1) personnel vehicles, 1,369 (306) horses, 328 (89) horse-drawn vehicles, 4 (-) guns, 9 (-) field kitchens.

West-East: 139 (88) men, 300 (88) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, reported that he could not guarantee to run convoys to schedule with the escort forces allocated to him: a. convoys from Constantza to Sevastopol, b. from Constantza to the Danube and Dnieper and, c. off the Crimean coast.

The Commander requested the allocation of 6 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla for overseas convoy duties and 6 naval ferry barges to escort the Crimean convoys.

While fully recognizing the justice of the Commander's demands, they cannot for the moment be granted. The Navy's chief task in the Black Sea, in accordance with the Führer's orders is, at present, to perform ferry duties across Kerch Strait and, after the ice has gone, also across the Sea of Azov. C-in-C Navy issued orders that all available resources were to be brought into action. This applies primarily to naval ferry barges which cannot at present be used for escort tasks off the Crimean coast. Boats of the newly formed 19th Harbor Defense Flotilla now being fitted out will on the other hand be suitable for the purpose. They have the necessary armament and are to arrive in the Crimea after 25 March.

Every boat of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla fit for service, at present three, except for 2 boats retained for minesweeping off the Crimean coast and the Sea of Azov, has been subordinated for escort duties to Commander, Convoys and Escorts. After their repair it is likewise intended to allocate the boats still in dock to the Commander, unless they should be urgently needed elsewhere. The first boat will leave dock about 15 March. Until the arrival of the Motor Minesweeper Group (RA) which is undergoing a dockyard period in Galatz until the middle of April, I cannot spare the two Crimean boats, which in view of the repeated mining of the supply route, are needed for minesweeping operations, checking the routes etc. Commander, Convoys and Escorts will be advised accordingly.

CONFIDENTIAL

5 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted no enemy forces in the central and southeastern Black Sea or the southern Crimea. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast identified lively traffic to the north. At noon 2 M.T.B.s stood 5 miles south of Novorossisk. There were 6,000 tons of merchant shipping, 6 motor minesweepers and about 25 boats in Ghelenjik harbor. South of Ghelenjik 1 freighter of about 2,000 tons and 1 patrol vessel on a northwesterly course were identified. About 25 miles northwest of Tuapse there were another freighter of about 3,000 tons and 1 patrol vessel also on a northwesterly course, south of Tuapse 1 freighter of 2,500 tons on a southerly course. Approximately 25 miles northwest of Tuapse 4 merchant ships totaling 3,600 tons, all on course northwest. Off Ghelenjik another freighter of 2,000 tons on alternating course. Off Cape Pitsunda 2 patrol vessels with 1 merchant ship of 4,000 tons and 1 M.T.B., course 130°. About 5,000 tons of merchant shipping and about 10 boats were in Tuapse with 1 freighter of 1,500 tons which was leaving port. There were several small craft, 1 submarine and some 2,300 tons of shipping in Ochamchiri harbor. Port Commander, Novorossisk observed several boats and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons in Zemeskaya Bay.

0900 According to an Army report, 9 boats were sighted on the route from Ghelenjik to the bridgehead.

During the morning the D/F Station intercepted 1 destroyer off the central east coast. In addition Main Naval D/F Station Constantza identified lively activity of small craft off the central to northern east coast. Three submarines were intercepted at sea, 1 in the central to western Black Sea, the others off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0930 Meteorological Station, Simferopol forecast NW to W winds, force 5.

Because of the weather, E-boat operations will have to be abandoned during the coming night, particularly since yesterday's storm has caused a heavy swell in the Black Sea.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Army Group A reported a Fuhrer directive which ordered that on account of the bad road conditions to be expected in the Taman Peninsula during the coming months, supply traffic from Kerch to Anapa should be increased. Up to the present two naval ferry barges have been operating on the route from Kerch to Anapa but adverse weather has permitted only 2 crossings.

Army Group A requested an increase of supplies to 240 tons daily. To achieve this, 3 naval ferry barges must daily put in to Anapa so that 9 barges will be needed. The possibility of operations having to be abandoned because of the weather has not been taken into account, and this would seriously affect the transport target.

The daily and inevitably almost routine operations of 3 naval ferry barges on the Cape Takil - Anapa route will soon be intercepted by the enemy during his regular air reconnaissance, with the result that his surface and air forces will attack and paralyze this important supply traffic. Since I have no forces available to cover these unprotected sea flanks and the ferry barges are not armed for defense against bombs and aerial torpedoes, I requested the 8th Air Corps:

1. to carry out an exhaustive reconnaissance of air grid squares 6500, 7500 and 8500 daily, from dawn,
2. to have bomber formations in readiness for operations against enemy surface forces,
3. to provide fighter cover for formations of naval ferry barges during their passage from Cape Takil to Anapa.

Operations Staff, Scheurlen received orders to turn over another seven fully operational naval ferry barges for the Anapa traffic in addition to the two already in operation. I have commissioned Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla to carry out the task in compliance with direct orders from Admiral, Black Sea.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to extend landing facilities at Anapa as quickly as possible, so that four naval ferry barges can be unloaded at a time. If 9 ferry barges are withdrawn from the Kerch-Taman traffic, transportations across Kerch Strait are bound to drop. I have drawn the attention of Army Group A to this matter. In the event of bad weather which

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-11-

196

would make the passage to Anapa impossible, it is proposed to put the naval ferry barges used there at the disposal of Naval Special Transport Staff for a brief period, to be used for ferry operations across Kerch Strait.

1900 Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 again checked the route from Theodosia to Cape Takil and the place where the moored mine dropped by the Russian plane was cut (see War Diary 17 February). No mines swept. The boats were ordered to sweep route Brown from Theodosia to Yalta with oropesa gear on 6 March.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

2000 The enemy air force became very active today. One naval ferry barge received 2 direct hits from bombs dropped by two low-flying planes. One rebounded and exploded on the water, the other was a dud. Only slight damage caused. One combined operations landing craft was hit by a bomb and badly damaged.

After the wind had abated to NW, force 4 - 5, it was possible with help of tugs to resume traffic to the fish-salting works and to Taman. The ice situation there is unchanged.

Combined operations craft were obliged to stop traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka on account of heavy drift ice.

25 naval ferry barges crossing 45 times, shipped:

East-West: 2,049 (1,070) men, 455 (455) prisoners, 271 (45) civilians, 82 (31) lorries, 5 (5) personnel vehicles, 1,434 (861) horses, 360 (210) horse-drawn vehicles, 14 (14) tons of ammunition, 50 (-) wounded, 2 (-) guns, 3 (1) motor cycles, 2 (-) field kitchens.

West-East: 108 (108) men, 588 (508) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

High seas forced minesweeping operations by the FZ-group to be abandoned after one attempt. Eight mine explosions were observed in mine section K 4 of the recently laid minefields at the southern approach to Kerch Strait. The mines were unmoored by fields of pack ice drifting south from the Sea of Azov.



CONFIDENTIAL

Air reconnaissance today identified remarkably lively traffic off the Caucasus coast, concentrated between Tuapse and Ghelenjik (see Enemy Situation). This confirmed previous observations that the enemy was proceeding with supply traffic during daylight, particularly northeast of Tuapse, in order to avoid night attacks by our E-boats.

Until such time as the Air Force's daylight attacks on enemy supply steamers compel them to proceed by night in the area within the radius of action of our E-boats, only our U-boats can intercept this traffic.. During coming operations my intention will be again to post available U-boats just off the Caucasus coast between Sukhum and Tuapse.. This plan coincides with a directive received today from Operations Division, Submarine Operations Section.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

6 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted no enemy vessels in the southeastern Black Sea. The weather only permitted a very partial reconnaissance of the coast and harbors. Five merchant ships of about 1,000 tons were identified in Ghelenjik, 1 coastal vessel off Ghelenjik and 5 M.T.B.s on a southeasterly course off Cape Adler. During the morning 5 boats proceeding at low speed were sighted south of Novorossisk.

Naval D/F Station, Constantza obtained a bearing on 1 destroyer west of Ghelenjik transmitting a short signal to Coastal Radio Station, Ghelenjik. One submarine was intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 1 off the east coast. Main Naval D/F Station identified enemy air reconnaissance as far as the sea area south of Sevastopol.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

1000 Unfavorable weather has persisted.

W to SW winds, force 5 during the day, veering to NW and freshening to 6 in the evening.

1135 "Ship 19" was ordered to leave for anti-submarine operations off the Crimean coast at 1200, to occupy the area between Yalta and Theodosia, observed to be the focal point of submarine operations, on the night of 6 March and to put in to Theodosia during 7 March.

1300 Naval ferry barges Nos. 142 and 469 put out on their third transport operation to Anapa. Boats will anchor near the coast off Cape Takil during the night of 6 March and proceed at dawn.

FZ-group twice swept the route south of Kossa Tuzla, there and back with 3 sets of gear and covering the breadth of two sweeps. No mines swept.

1400 Motor minesweepers R 163 and R 165 put in to Yalta.

Despite poor weather conditions the boats swept route Brown near the Crimean coast with oropesa gear. No mines swept.

1450 Meteorological Station, Simferopol forecast that the wind would continue to freshen. "Ship 19" was ordered to break off anti-submarine operations since radar gear would not work in the present high seas. "Ship 19" put in to Sevastopol.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Favorable weather and ice conditions enabled all traffic to proceed unimpeded to Taman and the fish-salting works. The westerly and southwesterly winds did not interfere with it. At 1127 a fully loaded combined operations craft returning from the fish-salting works to Kerch struck a mine in 45° 14.6' N, 36° 36.6' E and sank. Of the crew and the troops embarked there were 4 killed, 30 missing and 21 wounded.

This morning the route from the fish-salting works to Taman was checked north of Kossa Tuzla by a minesweeping Ju. As a result of the explosion the route was closed this afternoon and a search by a minesweeping Ju and an FZ boat with cracker equipment was ordered. No mines swept.

21 naval ferry barges crossing 46 times shipped:

East-West: 2,064 (934) men, 478 (233) prisoners, 302 (160) civilians, 130 (130) wounded, 75 (23) lorries, 33 (10) personnel vehicles, 2,169 (1,114) horses, 457 (246) horse-drawn vehicles, 20 (18) head of cattle, 7 (-) motor cycles, 4 (-) field kitchens.

West-East: 26 (26) men, 450 (450) tons of stone, 560 (253) tons of supplies. (Navy's figures in brackets.)

In addition, 2 naval ferry barges loaded with timber for the Army left Yalta for Theodosia. They will proceed to Kerch on 7 March.

Eight planes dropped bombs on Taman today. Some hits were scored on the town but no military damage was done.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported the position at the front unchanged. There have been some exchanges of gunfire but we have so far suffered no losses.

E-boat S 72 has had her engine overhauled and has now reported ready for action at Constantza. She received orders to join the Flotilla at Ivan Baba. S 51 will be released shortly to have her engines overhauled at Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL

7 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea was without result. Off the northern east coast there was lively activity of moderately large merchant ships, mainly towards Ghelenjik. In the Ghelenjik area there were 2 merchant ships of 2,500 tons each on a northwesterly course, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons about 15 miles northwest of Tuapse and 1 destroyer on a northwesterly course. One freighter of about 3,000 tons heading south and 1 destroyer were sighted 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik. At 1352 in grid square 8551 (5 miles south of Ghelenjik) 1 freighter of 2,500 tons was identified, course northwest. At 1334 in grid square 8555 (15 miles southeast of Ghelenjik) 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, 1 patrol vessel, 1 escort vessel were identified, course northwest. Grid square 8558 one freighter of 3,000 tons, 1 destroyer, course southeast (25 miles south of Ghelenjik).

There was only slight activity off the central to southern Caucasus coast. Off Gudauty there was one 2,000-ton freighter and 1 patrol vessel, course northwest. Visual reconnaissance identified the heavy warships as well as 3 destroyers in the bases of Batum and Poti. In the Sochi area 1 merchant ship of about 3,000 tons and 1 guard vessel were proceeding southward.

Main Naval D/F Station identified the destroyer reported on the previous day still at sea. In the evening another destroyer was in the Tuapse area. Two submarines were detected at sea in an unidentified position, 4 others were in the central to western Black Sea.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 vessel and 1 destroyer off the headland. The destroyer was attacked by gunfire and turned away.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0900 South Crimea and north Caucasus coast:

Winds SW force 5 - 6, veering W to NW, force 6 afternoon. Visibility moderate.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

The shipments of timber (3 naval ferry barges from Yalta to Theodosia, 2 naval ferry barges from Theodosia to Kerch) had to be postponed for 24 hours because of the weather. E-boat operations were out of the question.

1800 Minesweeping operations by the FZ-group south of Kossa Tuzla had to be broken off because of the high seas. Two boats searched the route north of the fish-salting works with cracker equipment. No mines swept. Operations by minesweeping plane over the combined operations landing craft route from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka were likewise without result.

1900 Naval ferry barges F 142 and F 469 carried out the third transport operation to Anapa according to plan and without incident.

They anchored off Cape Takil shortly before dusk and will put in to Kerch on the morning of 8 March.

2000 "Ship 19" was ordered to continue anti-submarine operations broken off on 6 March because of the weather, on 8 and 9 March off the south Crimean coast, concentrating on the area between Cape Meganom and Cape Chauda.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the fourth landing stage for which I applied, at Anapa, will be ready on 9 March. (See War Diary 5 March.)

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Ice conditions in Taman Bay are unchanged.

There was a broad belt of pack ice off Kossa Chuchka so that the traffic of combined operations craft between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka had to be brought to a halt. A temperature of + 5° has considerably thawed the approach roads, making evacuation extremely difficult.

The checksweep of the supply route to the fish-salting works on the afternoon of 6 March having been without result, traffic was resumed at 0430 with 24 naval ferry barges and 1 lighter. Enemy air activity was only slight during the day. Bombs were dropped on Temriuk and Taman. No damage was reported.

In 66 crossings transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 1,968 (1,690) men, 475 (103) prisoners,  
396 (37) civilians, 82 (19) lorries,

CONFIDENTIAL

13 (4) personnel vehicles,  
2,218 (1,745) horses, 534 (347)  
horse-drawn vehicles, 3 (-) field  
kitchens, 1,076 (-) bombs, 22 (22)  
tons of Army supplies, 27 (25)  
draft animals, 4 (4) motor cycles.

West-East: 127 (47) men, 12 (-) searchlights,  
125 (92) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

2215 E-boat S 72 put in to Ivan Baba from Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

8 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The Air Force was unable to carry out day and night reconnaissance because of the weather.

Port Commander, Novorossisk observed 4 vessels, presumably M.T.B.s, leaving Ghelenjik.

The D/F Station identified 1 destroyer off the central east coast at 1120, and another either in or off Tuapse. This destroyer was intercepted in the same area on the previous day.

Main Naval D/F Station intercepted a third destroyer off the northern east coast during the evening. Only 2 submarines were located at sea, 1 off the east coast and 1 in the central to western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

- 0600 Three naval ferry barges put out from Yalta to Theodosia with timber for constructions by the Pioneers in Kerch Strait.
- 0700 "Ship 19" put out on anti-submarine operations immediately off the Crimean coast with orders to stand between Cape Atlama and Cape Chauda on the night of 8/9 March.
- 1200 Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to put out from Kerch with 2 naval ferry barges at approximately 1400 for the fourth transport operation to Anapa (cover name "Kleiner Bar 4").

Weather forecast:

- 1200 N-NW winds, force 6-7.
- 1700 An enemy submarine attacked the "Volga-Don", escorted by 2 Rumanian coastal boats, near Cape Tarkhankutzki. Three torpedoes were fired and missed. The Rumanian coastal vessels attacked the submerged submarine with depth charges without visible success.

The attack on the German convoy on the important supply route Constantza-Sulina-Sevastopol has led me to give orders that my only fully operational anti-submarine vessel, "Ship 19", on completion of her operations off the south Crimean coast today, is to join Commander Convoys and Escorts for anti-submarine patrols between Sevastopol and Cape Tarkhankutzki.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-19-

204

CONFIDENTIAL

1900 Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla reported that "Kleiner Bär 4" had to be postponed for 24 hours since the ferry barges were not loaded in time.

Now that the harbors of Rostov, Yeisk and Akhtari are again in Russian hands, the presence of light enemy forces must be expected as soon as the ice melts; they may proceed via the Don or possibly be transported by rail. Such forces, combined with the Russian Air Force, may considerably hamper German supply traffic and the evacuation across the Sea of Azov, due to start as soon as ice conditions have improved.

With reference to the situation this will cause and the measures I have adopted I reported to Group South as follows:

- "1. I have given orders that supply traffic and evacuation via the Sea of Azov is to start immediately the ice melts.

Main routes:

- a. Temriuk-Kerch.
  - b. Temriuk-Berdyansk.
  - c. Taman-Berdyansk or Genichesk for the evacuation and supply traffic of Army Group A.
  - d. Mariupol-Taganrog for supply traffic of Army Group South. Naval ferry barges, tugs with lighters and fishing vessels adapted as transports will be used.
2. The enemy will endeavor to interfere with and paralyze this traffic by means of:-
    - a. mines,
    - b. bombing, aerial torpedo and gunnery attacks on vessels and ports,
    - c. attacks by light and auxiliary warships using guns or possibly torpedoes, e.g. M.T.S.s, proceeding via the Don into the Sea of Azov.
  3. The following necessary measures have been adopted:
    - a. Preparation of minesweepers against moored and non-contact mines.



CONFIDENTIAL

Admiral, Black Sea has applied for two additional flotillas, one equipped with towed loop gear, for the purpose. Until their arrival every available kind of minesweeper has been ordered to operate in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov. There are in addition three minesweeping Ju planes which the 8th Air Corps will operate in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea's request.

On completion of their dockyard period, it is proposed to use Motor Minesweeper Group (RA) in operations against moored mines. Until then, two boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and Motor Minesweeper R 30 from the Danube Flotilla will operate. Coastal Defense Flotilla for the Sea of Azov is being formed and will be ready for operations with motor pinnace gear when the ice melts.

Allocation:

Six boats each for Mariupol, Berdyansk, Genichesk, Temriuk.

- b. All vessels used in supply traffic will be armed against enemy planes and ships. Naval ferry barges are adequately armed and tugs and lighters must be similarly armed. Army Group South have promised to assist by supplying light guns with crews for vessels operating between Mariupol and Taganrog.
- c. The north coast of the Sea of Azov will be defended by one 15 cm. battery, one 7.5 cm. battery at Mariupol, one 12.7 cm. battery at Berdyansk West, one 12.7 cm. battery at Yalta (Azov) and one 7.62 cm. battery at Genichesk. Furthermore the Port Commander and Port Control Station will be at Mariupol; Berdyansk and Genichesk also Taganrog will be reinforced with a Port Commander. Moreover, there will be River Police in every port."

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The following shipments were made without enemy interference today, ice situation unchanged:

East-West: 2,976 (909) men, 285 (-) prisoners,  
189 (83) civilians, 269 (34) lorries,

CONFIDENTIAL

107 (9) personnel vehicles,  
2,561 (1,770) horses, 712  
(451) horse-drawn vehicles,  
5 (-) field kitchens, 12 (-)  
trailers, 23 (-) wounded, 12  
(1) motor cycles, 5 (1) guns.

West-East: 84 (2) men, 2 (-) lorries,  
400 (121) tons of supplies.  
(The Navy's figures in brackets.)

Naval Special Transport Staff made 66  
crossings with 26 naval ferry barges.

The tender "Grafenau" was employed in ice-  
breaking on the route used by the combined  
operations craft, which had had to cease  
their traffic at noon on 5 March owing to  
the ice-barrier across Kossa Chuchka.  
Once a channel had been cut they were able  
to resume their vital supply traffic to  
Kossa Chuchka. The "Grafenau" will be  
available on 9 and 10 March for similar  
duties.

Army Group A submitted to Army High Command  
a report of the troops, prisoners, horses  
etc., evacuated from the Gotenkopf bridge-  
head since 6 March and emphasized that this  
had been achieved in the face of extremely  
bad weather, not only on land but in the  
air and at sea. Army Group A further  
stressed that this good work was the result  
of the excellent morale and cooperation of  
all three services.

According to Army Group A's report, shipments  
by the Navy and Combined Operations across  
Kerch Strait totaled:

38,737 men,  
10,072 prisoners,  
10,171 civilians,  
19,640 horses,  
4,451 horse-drawn vehicles,  
2,989 motor transport vehicles, guns etc.

The Navy's share of this totaled:

16,229 men,  
2,483 prisoners,  
2,587 civilians,  
2,389 horse-drawn vehicles.  
903 motor transport vehicles,  
9,591 horses.

2000 E-boat S 51 put out from Ivan Baba for  
engine overhaul at Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL

2045      The FZ-group swept the Burunsky Tuzla supply route twice in both directions with two sets of gear (towed loop gear and noise box turbines) and double breadth of sweep.      No mines swept.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

9 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The weather again prevented air reconnaissance today. Night reconnaissance south of the Crimea and over the northern Caucasus coast was without result.

At 1100 Naval D/F Station reported that, according to radio traffic, a convoy was probably proceeding from Poti to the central or northern east coast. A destroyer reported by Main Naval D/F Station the previous day, was identified off the central east coast, presumably heading south. In addition 2 submarines were intercepted at sea, 1 of them in an unidentified position, the second in the central Black Sea.

Own Situation:

At 0610 naval ferry barge F 371, proceeding in ballast from Kerch to the fish-salting works outside the prescribed route, struck a mine in 45° 14.5' N and 36° 36.3' E and sank. The entire crew was lost.

F 371 apparently left the prescribed course in poor visibility and struck an ELM mine lying outside the route or a mine from the Russian warning area immediately adjacent to the scene of the explosion.

The route has temporarily been closed. It will be re-opened after the position of the explosion has been fixed.

0830 "Ship 19" put in to Theodosia from anti-submering operations off the south Crimean coast. She had nothing to report.

Weather forecast:

1000 NE winds, force 4, visibility 3 - 10 miles, temperatures around zero in the sea area between Theodosia and Tuapse.

On the basis of the forecast I have decided to order E-boat operations for the coming night. Since there will still be fairly heavy swell and rather rough water for E-boats out at sea, the best way to approach the proposed operational area between Tuapse and Ghelenjik is by keeping in to the coast as far as Cape Takil, then to Shelesni Rog

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

and from there again keeping in to the south coast of the Taman Peninsula. The boats can make the return passage to Ivan Baba with a following wind (NE) direct from the operational area over the open sea south of the warning areas off Kerch Strait.

1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to leave Ivan Baba at 1500 for operations against enemy supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik, focal point southeast of Cape Idokopas, and to stand in their assigned operational area from about 2000 to 0400.

1400 Three naval ferry barges left Kerch for Anapa ("Kleiner Bär 4") with 64 tons of ammunition, 24 tons of straw, 50 tons of grain for fodder, 30 tons of stores, 5 tons of mail, 4 tons of timber.

A checksweep of Kerch Strait by the FZ-group and a minesweeping plane was without result.

1730 North of the fish-salting works, mines were seen to drop simultaneously at various points. The route was closed on account of suspected mines. Orders for minesweeping Ju planes and FZ boats with cracker equipment to check the area have been issued for daybreak on 10 March.

1740 The 1st E-Boat Flotilla broke off their passage to the operational area on account of the heavy seas and will put in to Ivan Baba.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,870 (631) men, 359 (-) prisoners, 556 (3) civilians, 117 (-) lorries, 53 (-) personnel vehicles, 2,547 (809) horses, 703 (221) horse-drawn vehicles, 138 (122) wounded, 8 (-) field kitchens, 15 (-) trailers, 4 (-) motor cycles, 35 (-) tons of bombs.

West-East: 1,207 (26) men, 206 (109) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The small proportion of the day's total contributed by naval ferry barges may be attributed to:

1. The closing of the route because of the mine accident to naval ferry barge F 371.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. The heavy seas which caused difficulties and waste of time at the loading stages, at the fish-salting works and Taman.
3. Many damaged naval ferry barges had to be withdrawn and more were being used for the Kerch-Anapa traffic.

Novorossisk

Nothing to report apart from artillery fire.

Situation at the bridgehead unchanged.

Motor minesweepers R 165 and R 163 escorted the steamer "Lola" via route Brown from Sevastopol to Yalta.

I have submitted the following report of results for February 1943 to Group South:

"Number of warships escorted: 4.

Number of merchant vessels escorted: 42 vessels totaling 57,277 G.R.T.

Enemy air attacks: 7 air attacks on our convoys, minesweeping formations and E-boat Flotilla. Numerous attacks on the harbors of Kerch, Taman, fish-salting works, Temriuk, Yalta, Theodosia. Two submarine attacks.

Losses: Naval ferry barge F 473 sunk by mine near Kherson, towed to Sevastopol: total loss. Naval ferry barge F 143 sunk by mine in Kerch Strait. Naval ferry barge F 176 was hit by a bomb at Taman, burnt out, total loss. Tug "Haniel 24" struck by a mine in Kerch Strait. RO 33 caught fire and sank in Tendra Bay. RS 21 burnt out at Sevastopol, total loss.

Successes (mines swept etc.): One torpedoboat sunk, also 3 steamers of 3,000, 2,500 and 1,200 G.R.T. respectively, 2 coastal vessels of 500 and 250 tons, 1 lighter of 800 G.R.T. 28 moored mines were swept and 8 non-contact mines. 7 minefields were laid."

CONFIDENTIAL

10 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance on the night of 9/10 March was without result. During the day long-range reconnaissance sighted 3 large passenger ships, 2 on a westerly course and the third on an easterly course, off the central Turkish coast. Nothing was sighted in the central Black Sea. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast as far as Batum obtained good results. All the heavy warships were identified in their bases. Shipping in Ghelenjik harbor comprised some 8,000 tons of merchant shipping, several coastal vessels and boats; in Poti harbor several freighters, including 1 ship of 8,500 tons. At Batum, 4 medium freighters, 1 large freighter, 3 large tankers in the roads. At Tuapse, in addition to 1 destroyer, several motor minesweepers, M.T.B.s, coastal vessels and 13,500 tons of merchant shipping were identified. At Sochi there were 4 M.T.B.s, 3 coastal vessels and 1 tanker of about 2,000 tons off the harbor. In the Novorossisk area during the early morning 1 freighter and 3 patrol vessels, course SE, were sighted. Off Poti towed convoy heading for Poti. During the forenoon 1 merchant ship of approximately 2,500 tons northwest of Sukhum.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 large vessel approaching from the south at 1405 and 2 vessels about 600 meters off the east mole coming from the direction of Kabardinka at 1810.

0900 Naval D/F Station Constantza intercepted 1 destroyer south of Adler on course southeast; also another destroyer in the evening, presumably off the central east coast. Two submarines were intercepted at sea, position unidentified. One submarine stood off the east coast and 2 more were identified in the northwestern to western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0700 Two minesweeping Ju planes and FZ boats are to sweep the closed route from Kerch to the fish-salting works with cracker equipment. There will be no traffic between the fish-salting works and Taman.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-27-

212

CONFIDENTIAL

0930 Forecast for the sea area off the south Crimean and north Caucasus coasts predicted NE-E winds, force 6, abating to force 4 during the night.

Adverse weather prevented FZ boats with towed loop gear from checking the Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Takil routes. For the same reason the orders which I issued to Harbor Defense Flotilla Kerch to check the closed route, using linked sweeps, will have to be postponed to 11 March.

1400 Three naval ferry barges ("Kleiner Bär 4") returned from Anapa to Kerch loaded with 300 rounds of 10.5 cm. ammunition, 5 lorries, 36 bales of cotton, 4 tons of service supplies, 3 guns and 2 field kitchens.

The next shipment to Anapa ("Kleiner Bär 5") has been postponed in view of the weather and the closing of the route until 11 March.

2100 Operations by the minesweeping Ju plane over the closed route were without result. The section over which objects were seen to drop was covered 20 times to a breadth of 400 meters and another 3 times to a breadth of 600 meters.

Operations with cracker equipment were also without result. The route has been reopened and ferry traffic may be resumed on the morning of 11 March provided certain precautions are observed.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Two combined operations craft performed transport operations on the Kossa Chuchka route. Landing stages were ice-free; nevertheless, traffic was impeded by drift ice from the Sea of Azov.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,051 (115) men, 368 prisoners, 337 (8) civilians, 132 lorries, 94 personnel vehicles, 1,318 (191) horses, 316 (62) horse-drawn vehicles, 8 wounded, 11 motor cycles, 5 guns.

The figures refer to the naval ferry barges which put in after 1700 on 9 March and were not unloaded until 10 March.



CONFIDENTIAL

West-East: 84 soldiers, 1 motor cycle,  
57 tons of military supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The Pavlovski minefield has now been swept.

Only two mines were swept during seven days' operations with motor pinnace gear and cutting kite sweep. The remaining mines (32 of them) seem to have been dispersed by drifting ice, by striking German vessels and possibly by breaking from their moorings.

CONFIDENTIAL

11 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

A night reconnaissance plane equipped with Lichtenstein gear located 1 vessel, presumably a submarine, about 110 miles south of Alushta.

Air reconnaissance over the central and eastern Black Sea sighted 1 patrol vessel off the Turkish coast. On account of the weather, reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors extended only as far as Ochamchiri. Troop embarkations and heavier shipping than normal were observed at Ochamchiri. During the early hours of the morning there were 3 transports and 5 M.T.B.s off Ghelenjik, in the harbor 3 merchant ships of 1,500 tons each, 5 merchant ships of 500 to 800 tons, 1 M.T.B., 5 motor minesweepers and 10 boats. Tsupse was only partially examined and shipping in port was slight. Shipping at Sukhum amounted to approximately 3,000 tons of merchant shipping, minesweepers and 7 coastal vessels of 500 to 800 tons. There were 2 patrol vessels off Ochamchiri harbor, two more entering and 2 leaving port, 1 destroyer putting in, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons with 1 patrol vessel in the roads, 2 freighters in harbor with steam up, 1 carrying troops. Considerable loading activity was detected on the quays.

During the morning Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 M.T.B. coming from Ghelenjik off the headland.

From 2045 to 2245 Main Naval D/F Station located 3 submarines between Theodosia and Kerch Strait. In addition there was 1 submarine in the central to western Black Sea, one in the northeastern Black Sea and one off the east coast. Radio traffic did not reveal any heavy warships. No activity other than movements of small craft was identified.

Own Situation:

0600

All available minesweepers were employed with the naval ferry barges proceeding in groups of four when traffic between Kerch, the fish-salting works and Taman was resumed. For reasons of safety (the still existing danger of mines) only 50 men were embarked on each of the barges used for today's operation,

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

namely the shipment of 17th Army H.Q. from Kerch to Taman. This meant that available space could not be fully exploited and this brought down the totals.

- 0800 The naval ferry barges put in to Kerch from the fourth Anapa transport operation.
- 0900 The convoy proceeding from Theodosia to Kerch comprising the merchant ship "Theben", the tanker "Moselia" and 5 naval ferry barges carrying timber for pioneer constructions, was attacked by a submarine between Cape Chauda and Cape Obok. The ferry barges attacked her with 10 depth charges without visible success.
- 0930 According to the forecast, weather conditions during the coming night will continue unsettled, so that operations of E-boats and Italian E-boats will have to be postponed for another 24 hours.
- 1015 The convoy was attacked a second time by a submarine which fired 2 torpedoes. One torpedo passed under naval ferry barge F 170 amidships, the second missed her by 40 meters astern. The ferry barges repeated their attack with depth charges, again without visible success.
- "Ship 19" which had previously been ordered to carry out anti-submarine operations on the night of 11/12 March between Cape Chauda and Cape Atlama and then to transfer to Sevastopol for anti-submarine patrol between Cape Tarkhankutzki and Cape Khersonese (area of the submarine attack on the steamer "Volga-Don" on 8 March) was directed to prolong anti-submarine operations south of Cape Chauda by 24 hours.
- 2000 Three naval ferry barges put out for the fifth Anapa transport operation with 131 tons of ammunition, 73 tons of stores, 40 tons of grain for fodder.

24 naval ferry barges today took part in ferry traffic across the Kerch Strait.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,234 (347) men, 403 (403) prisoners, 395 (-) civilians, 35 (2) wounded, 373 (-) lorries, 66 (-) personnel vehicles, 1,213 (469) horses, 366 (181) horse-drawn vehicles, 4 (-) field kitchens, 7 (-) trailers,

CONFIDENTIAL

20 (-) motor cycles, 5 (4) guns,  
6 (-) tractors, 1 (-) generator,  
166 (88 tons) of bombs, 68 tons  
of military supplies.

West-East: 1,191 (422) men (replacement  
for Army H.Q. 17), 6 (3) lorries,  
8 (-) personnel vehicles, 22 (-)  
tents, 608 (395) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The reasons for the barges' relatively  
small contribution are:

- a. They had to cross in groups, which made  
it difficult for loading and unloading  
operations to be carried out smoothly  
at the landing stages.
- b. The naval ferry barges were not used  
to capacity as the danger of unswept  
mines still threatened.
- c. The barges had to wait until 0600 to  
begin this traffic, as the checksweep had  
to be completed first.

The route Kerch-Taman-fish-salting works was  
today swept by 2 FZ-groups with towed loop  
gear, by Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch with  
cropsa gear and by minesweeping plane. No  
mines swept.

Today we began the marking of the supply route  
with buoys at closer intervals. This should  
enable ships to keep to the channel in poor  
visibility and prevent them deviating from  
their course and coming into danger from  
mines.

Army Group A today reported that following  
changes in the transportation program (Stor  
program), transportation from the harbors  
of Genichesk and Berdyansk would therefore  
no longer be required. They requested that  
for the purpose of shipping stores from  
Kerch to Temriuk, after the ice has thawed,  
shipping be made available for 400 tons of  
supplies daily, later increasing to 600 tons.  
With the arrival of lighters and tugs at  
present in transit there will be sufficient  
shipping to meet the above demands.

Enemy planes repeatedly bombed Kerch and  
Taman during the day. There was no real  
damage.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1240 An enemy plane was fired on and hit near Cape Aitodor. The plane jettisoned a torpedo (surface runner).
- 2003 After an unsuccessful raid, an enemy plane crashed at Theodosia near the Battle H.Q. of Naval Shore Commander Crimea/Ukraine. The crew were killed.

In the Novorossisk sector both sides maintained normal artillery activity. Otherwise nothing to report. Only slight movement of small vessels was observed in Novorossisk Bay.

Convoys from the Bosphorus to Constantza and from Constantza to Sevastopol proceeded according to plan. Nothing to report.

CONFIDENTIAL

12 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over the central and southeastern Black Sea detected no enemy forces. Reconnaissance was made of the harbors and the east coast as far as Batum but no shipping was identified between Ghelenjik and Sukhum. Off Ochenchiri 1 tanker of 5,000 tons on a northwesterly course escorted by 2 motor minesweepers. The mouth of the Chobi could not be reconnoitered because of the fighter defense there. At Ghelenjik 3 freighters and 6 coastal vessels totaling 7,000 tons, and about 30 boats, at Tuapse 4 freighters, 4 coastal vessels, totaling 11,200 tons, and 10 boats. Off Sukhum harbor, 1 merchant ship of 1,000 tons, 1 coastal vessel and 1 floating dock, and 8 coastal vessels totaling about 6,500 tons in harbor. Shipping at Ochenchiri comprised about 3,800 tons of merchant shipping, 10 boats and 1 destroyer. Shipping at the bases of Poti and Batum showed little change; the heavy warships were identified in port. During the early hours of the morning between Novorossisk and Ghelenjik, 2 groups of M.T.B.s with 3 boats each and 1 group of 4 boats were sighted on an easterly course at high speed. Air Force photographic survey revealed 1 destroyer of the "Frunse" class, 2 motor minesweepers, 2 M.T.B.s, 3 freighters and 5 coastal vessels totaling 6,500 tons at Tuapse. Four submarines, 5 motor minesweepers, 2 freighters and 3 coastal vessels totaling 4,200 tons at Ochenchiri.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 3 M.T.B.s and 1 destroyer between 0945 and 0955; they were attacked with gunfire and turned away to the SSE. One transport, tonnage not identified, was intercepted heading for Ghelenjik. Apart from activity of small craft off the east coast, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted only 2 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and one more off the east coast. Radio traffic revealed no movements of the larger warships.

Own Situation:

Between 0000 and 0100 three M.T.B.s penetrated Kerch Strait and were located for the first time by an Air Force radar set off Kamish

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Burun Bay, then picked up by searchlights and attacked by anti-aircraft batteries and one naval battery. Two boats immediately turned away when attacked, one continued towards Kamish Burun Bay. At dawn three unexploded torpedoes were discovered on the shore. According to the results of radar observation and to noise reports made by the three naval ferry barges making for Anapa and meantime at anchor near Cape Panagiya, the M.T.B.s passed over our minefields at the southern approach to Kerch Strait. Investigation of other sighting reports of probable enemy forces near Cape Takil (including 1 vessel with funnel) made in cooperation with Corps H.Q. Foerster (Special Duties) for the Defense of Kerch Strait, led to the conclusion that only three M.T.B.s had in point of fact been sighted for certain. The searchlights playing on the ice floes may have been deceptive.

Since the supply route may have been mined, the route from Cape Takil to Pavlovski has been closed and orders issued for a checksweep with FZ gear and gear for the clearance of moored mines.

The penetration of M.T.B.s into Kerch Strait as far as the immediate vicinity of Kamish Burun without either being sighted or impeded by German minefields compels the adoption of further security measures.

I therefore propose:

1. To organize a patrol service by placing a patrol boat in the gap in the minefield east of Cape Takil.
2. To lay a barrage against surprise attacks east of the gap in the minefield, and plan a hawser boom from Cape Takil to Cape Panagiya transversely across Kerch Strait with a patrolled gap through the minefield on the German supply route to Cape Takil.

Weather forecast:

0930

According to Meteorological Station, Simferopol the wind should subside and weather conditions be favorable for E-boat operations during the coming night. Easterly winds, force 3, visibility over 10 miles.

1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats will therefore be able to operate. Previous experience shows that the enemy endeavors to

CONFIDENTIAL

enter the area threatened by E-boats very early in the morning. We must therefore position our German forces as far to the southeast as possible. To make the most of the cover for our coastline, we shall have to divide the forces at our disposal.

I have therefore ordered:

1. Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla to operate northwest, 2 southeast of Tuapse, on the night of 12/13 March.
2. Four boats of Italian E-Boat Flotilla to operate between Osereika and Ghelenjik.

Thus supply traffic to Tuapse, from Tuapse to Ghelenjik, and from Ghelenjik to the bridgehead at Novorossisk can be intercepted. Both Flotillas have been directed to remain in their patrol positions until shortly before daybreak.

Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla submitted the results of his report to C-in-C Navy:

1. As at the end of January, C-in-C Navy strongly deprecated any compromise; he considered offensive operations to be the basis of any success.
2. C-in-C Navy therefore ordered massing of submarines in the areas with greatest concentrations of traffic where the depth of water gives them favorable chances of breaking in.
3. C-in-C Navy refused to sanction operations directed solely against ships off Poti and Batum. He considered them of secondary importance when compared with areas mentioned under para. 2 where opportunities of attacking warships are greater.
4. In the event of Russian operations against German supply traffic in the western Black Sea all our submarines must make for positions on the return route of the Russian Fleet, avoiding however, the heavily patrolled harbor approaches.

U 24 will be at operational readiness at Constantza on 14 March, U 19 provisionally on 19 March. Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla has received orders, in accordance with my decisions and the directive of C-in-C Navy, to position U 24 off the coast between Gagri and

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



Cape Kodor, and U 19 between Gagri and Cape Uchdere, in a patrol line 25 miles broad close to the coast. Because of the depth of water, both these operational areas are the most favorable for attacks close in to the coast. They extend 50 and 35 miles respectively along the coast and thus offer the possibility of evasive action if detected by enemy patrols, anti-submarine vessels, planes etc. From Constantza the boats will proceed directly to their operational areas and refuel at Theodosia on the return passage.

1230 Three naval ferry barges left Kerch for the sixth Anapa transport operation ("Kleiner Bar 6"). They transported 182 tons of ammunition, 47 tons of flour, 6 tons of salt, 9 men. The task was carried out in accordance with the usual methods of Anapa transport operations.

1530 After 25 covering runs by minesweeping plane and motor minesweeper R 30 checking with oropesa gear and the Harbor Defense Flotilla with motor pinnace gear, the closed route from Pavlovski to Takil was reopened.

1900 The minesweeping plane and the FZ-group swept the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works. No mines swept.

Repeated air raids on Taman, Kerch and Tomriuk caused no damage to naval installations.

Anti-submarine operations by "Ship 19" south of Cape Chauda so far without result.

It was a quiet day at Novorossisk. During the morning one of our Stuka planes attacked E-boats off Cape Lyshako. One E-boat was sunk.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

2000 Traffic crossed today in favorable weather, concentrating on the fish-salting works. All the naval ferry barges available took part in operations. Crossing in groups of 4 barges was retained as a safety measure. Ice conditions have again improved, so that on 15 March an attempt will be made to reach Senaya with one naval ferry barge led by the tender "Grafenau".

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,942 (1,064) men, 911 prisoners,  
600 (12) civilians, 50 (13)  
lorries, 60 (2) personnel motor  
vehicles, 2,580 (1,232) horses,  
689 (411) horse-drawn vehicles,

CONFIDENTIAL

9 field kitchens, 10 trailers,  
13 motor cycles, 11 ambulances,  
102 wounded, 41 (41) draught  
animals, 19 (2) tractors, 21 (8)  
guns.

West-East: 279 (79) soldiers, 412 (266)  
tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The fifth Anapa transport operation was carried out according to plan and without incident. Naval ferry barges put in to Anapa at 0730, and left for the return passage at 1330. The return transportation amounted to: 12 men, 3 lorries, 1 personnel motor vehicle, 212 bales of cotton, 5 field kitchens, 7 baggage waggons, 4 guns, 300 cans of grease.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla, reported that the unloading stages at Anapa are inadequate for the loading and unloading of 3 naval ferry barges daily and there is not sufficient personnel. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus received orders to request Army F.Q. 17 immediately to extend the landing stages in order to enlarge their capacity, and to reinforce the personnel working there.

CONFIDENTIAL

13 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Night reconnaissance with Lichtenstein gear located 1 tanker of about 5,000 tons and several small boats, presumably German E-boats, some 10 miles south of Gagri.

Air reconnaissance sighted no enemy vessels in the central and southeastern Black Sea. Good visibility enabled the planes to fly reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Tatum. All the heavy warships were identified in their bases. There were about 6,500 tons of shipping and 1 destroyer at Tuapse and 1 tanker on fire off the harbor. This is the 3 - 4,000 ton tanker torpedoed on the night of 12/13 March by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla. In the other harbors shipping was much the same. There was slight traffic off the entire east coast. Off Chelenjik there were 3 tugs and 1 freighter of about 1,000 tons on a southerly course. Ten miles southeast of Tuapse 1 merchant ship of 1,000 tons on a northwesterly course was identified. Off Sochi 2 M.T.B.s on course northwest. 150 miles to the west of Sochi shadows were seen, presumably of submerged submarines.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected only slight movements of small craft off the east coast. Four submarines were identified, of these one was in the western Black Sea and another off the east coast. The others were in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

0700 Four Italian E-boats put in to Theodosia again. Apart from lively enemy patrol activity by M.T.B.s and patrol vessels no enemy shipping was encountered between Chelenjik, Cape Doob and the headland near Myshako. In a brief encounter with enemy patrol forces, Italian E-boat No. 568 scored machine-gun hits on an M.T.B. We suffered neither damage nor casualties. These active enemy patrols are the result of our E-boat successes on 28 February. Future E-boat operations in this area will therefore require the full commitment of the boats. We will wait a few days, however, until Russian activity has subsided a little.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

0920 The steamer "Budapest", escorted by 3 naval ferry barges, was attacked by 2 torpedoes fired from a submarine 5 miles west of Cape Tarkhankutzki.

The "Budapest" evaded both torpedoes, one of which was a surface runner. Depth charges dropped by naval ferry barge F 135 were without result.

0940 The naval ferry barges of the sixth Anapa transport operation put in to Anapa. The seventh operation using 3 naval ferry barges had to be postponed to 14 March because there were no goods waiting to be loaded at Kerch. Army Group A was notified that, as a result, 3 barges were not used.

The ferry barges returned to Kerch at 1430.

Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 36 swept route Brown from Sevastopol from point 1 to point 4. No mines swept. The operation was broken off at point 4 because of the weather. The boats returned to Sevastopol.

1000 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba from operations. From 1900 the boats stood in pairs in lurking position immediately off the coast northwest and southeast of Tuapse. Towards 2200 a night reconnaissance plane of the 8th Air Corps, equipped with Lichtenstein gear, intercepted an enemy steamer southeast of Tuapse, gained contact and dropped flares. It then gave a homing signal to 1st E-Boat Flotilla as agreed upon with the 8th Air Corps. The 2 E-boats southeast of Tuapse began operations against the enemy convoy, and at 0500 attacked a 4,000 ton tanker escorted by 2 gunboats about 3 miles southeast of Tuapse. E-boats S 26 and S 47 scored hits with torpedoes. The gasoline in the tanker caught fire and burned fiercely for over an hour. Some of the flames were burning on the surface of the water. Enemy patrol vessels and coastal batteries fired at the E-boats but their gunfire was inaccurate and ineffective. Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that the ship sank.

Cooperation with the night reconnaissance plane, arrangements for which had been previously made with 8th Air Corps, brought excellent results. Following today's experience it is proposed to maintain this close cooperation by using homing signals and periodically dropping flares to direct the E-boats to enemy ships which have been located.

CONFIDENTIAL

The 2 boats operating northwest of Tuapse encountered no shipping and no patrol vessels. On the return passage they were unsuccessfully bombed by an enemy plane. Fire from a 2 cm. machine-gun was seen to hit the plane.

According to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, 2 M.T.B.s entered Anapa Bay on the night of 12/13 March. The boats were shelled by both army and naval guns and one of them was sunk. A torpedo exploded on shore without causing any damage. Presumably the M.T.B.s were looking for our naval ferry barges, another reason for not leaving them there overnight.

1200 According to the forecast the wind in the coming night should be E to NE force 3, thus permitting E-boat operations. I have therefore ordered 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla to repeat last night's operation.

1700 E-boat S 26 returned to Ivan Baba because one engine had failed. The Flotilla Commander continued operations with the 3 remaining boats.

1800 8th Air Corps reported that according to photographic evaluation the tanker torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla is of 7,000 tons; she is on fire but still afloat about a mile off the harbor approaches of Tuapse. Two tugs have made fast alongside the tanker, apparently in the attempt to tow her to Tuapse.

The 1st E-Boat Flotilla now at sea was informed by radio.

1900 Group South reported that the Russian steamer "Frunse" will leave Batum for Sevastopol on 13 March, or possibly later. She will carry a Russian trade delegation.

I do not approve the project of sending U 24, due to leave Constantza at 1400 on 14 March, against this ship.

Reasons are as follows:

1. When the German U-boats were proceeding to the operational area off Poti and Batum for their first operations there, they kept approximately 5 miles away from the shore in order to discover the habits of the shipping off the Turkish coast. They were then able to observe that this traffic keeps exclusively to territorial waters. It may be definitely assumed that the steamer "Frunse" will take the same route.

2. In view of the political situation she must not be attacked within territorial waters.
3. Her exact time of sailing is not known. Should it be postponed, to send U 24 against her would delay the U-boat's arrival in the assigned operational area. It would mean her temporary withdrawal from her principal task, namely operations against enemy supply traffic off the Caucasus coast.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic between Kerch, the fish-salting works and Taman proceeded today unimpeded by the weather or ice situation. To the north of Kerch Strait heavy drift ice from the Sea of Azov hindered traffic to Kossa Chuchka. The ice situation in Senaya Bay has so improved that one naval ferry barge led by the tender "Grafenau" was able to call at Senaya with a load of timber for bridge building. The transshipment ports of Kerch, Taman, the fish-salting works, Kossa Chuchka, Yenikale and the transports on passage were repeatedly attacked by enemy planes. Six planes were shot down, one of them probably by naval ferry barge F 331. Twenty naval ferry barges made the passage 46 times.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 3,523 (1,492) men, 418 (2) prisoners, 340 (62) civilians, 330 (9) lorries, 33 (5) personnel vehicles, 2,620 (1,516) horses, 530 (461) horse-drawn vehicles, 35 (-) trailers, 24 (24) tons of fuel, 14 (10) radio vans, tractors etc., 57 (32) wounded, 16 (7) guns, 27 (-) motor cycles, 33 (57) draft animals, 212 (212) bales of cotton.

West-East: 187 (10) soldiers, 321 (121) tons of supplies, 500 (500) tons of stone.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The FZ-group, Harbor Defense Flotilla Kerch and the minesweeping plane continued mine-sweeping in operations in Kerch Strait on the route between Kerch, the fish-salting works and Taman, south of Kossa Tuzla and along the coastal route, from Pavlovski to Cape Takil. No mines swept.

The route south of Kossa Tuzla has now been swept 22 times with towed loop gear both sides

CONFIDENTIAL

of the line of buoys. The eastern section of the route was also checked by a minesweeping plane. Since the last mine was swept, the route has been swept 8 times without success. A total of 8 non-contact mines was swept here. The route may be considered free of mines.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

14 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

On the night of 13/14 March night reconnaissance planes located some boats in the Adler area, probably our E-boats which were then between Sochi and Tuapse.

Day reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea and south of Kerch Strait as far as Myshako was without result despite good visibility. Harbor and coastal reconnaissance was made in good visibility as far as Ochamchiri. Poti was not examined owing to fighter cover and Batum only partially because of the weather. No movement of shipping along the entire coast. There were only about 3,500 tons of merchant shipping in Ghelenjik, shipping at Ochamchiri was heavier, comprising 1 merchant ship of about 2,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons and 7 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 tons. Five submarines were identified in port. The remaining ports had undergone no significant change.

In the early hours of the morning Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located a submarine some 65 miles west of Sevastopol and, an hour later, another some 70 kilometers west of Balaklava, probably the same boat. Otherwise only activity of small craft identified. Seven submarines were intercepted at sea, 3 in the central to western Black Sea, 2 off the east coast and 2 in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

- 0930 South coast of the Crimea and north coast of the Caucasus: NE to E winds, force 7, increasing to gale force 6 to 8, subsiding to 5 towards evening. Visibility over ten miles.
- 1100 Italian E-Boat Flotilla transferred 2 more Italian E-boats from Yalta to Theodosia. The Flotilla now has 6 boats at operational readiness at Theodosia.
- 1200 Three boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba from operations off the Caucasus coast southeast of Tuapse. Until 0240 the craft stood immediately off the

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

coast in grid square CL 9187. Neither shipping nor patrol vessels were sighted. According to air reconnaissance the tanker is still on fire 1 mile southeast of Tuapse. However, the boats did not operate against her because the Flotilla Commander who had watched the gasoline burning for several hours decided that she was now useless and probably aground.

He rightly decided to seek new targets.

On the return passage wind was NE 5, sea 4. At Ivan Baba they met 1 harbor defense boat drifting with engine trouble and towed her to Theodosia.

1200 Apart from having to tow the motor fishing vessel, the three hours' delay in arriving at Ivan Baba was mainly due to the sudden deterioration in the weather. Experience has shown such changes to be very frequent in the Black Sea. They are particularly bad for E-boat operations in such areas as these which are some 180 miles from base and where the peculiar Black Sea weather conditions and the lack of data from the Turkish and Caucasus coasts make it nearly impossible for the forecast to give any warning.

Kerch

1230 Three naval ferry barges put out for the seventh Anapa transport operation with a load of 20 tons of ammunition, 100 tons of stores, 74 tons of grain for fodder, 55 tons of fuel and 50 depth charges.

After 9 March nine naval ferry barges were employed in the Anapa transport operation, originally performed by 3 barges, since road conditions on the Taman Peninsula called for supplies to be delivered as close to the front as possible. Once a spell of dry weather makes the roads passable again there will be no need to continue using nine. Since their withdrawal has restricted shipments across Kerch Strait I have asked Army Group A for permission to withdraw six of them from the Anapa traffic and pointed out that they are of greater value on the route between Kerch, the fish-salting works and Taman than between Kerch and Anapa.

Minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait by the FZ-group and the Harbor Defense Flotilla had to be broken off because of the weather. A minesweeping plane swept the route to the fish-salting works on both sides of the line of buoys

CONFIDENTIAL

30 times. No mines swept.

An air photograph taken at 1145 revealed the tanker torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla 1 km. southeast of the entrance to Tuapse harbor; she is aground in about 12 meters of water and is still burning.

1400 U 24 put out for operations.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

16 naval ferry barges resumed traffic from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman at about 0400 in favorable weather. The weather suddenly deteriorated at 0800, with NE winds, force 6 - 7. At approximately 1000 traffic had to be discontinued because increasingly heavy seas were making it impossible for boats to go alongside the landing stages at the fish-salting works and Taman.

At 1030 on the return to Kerch via the prescribed route naval ferry barge F 136 struck a mine and sank. There was only 1 survivor out of the crew of 13.

The place where F 136 struck a mine has been swept several times daily since 9 March by minesweeping plane and FZ boats with towed loop gear, cracker equipment and noise box (turbines). Moreover, the route has been in constant use by naval ferry barges and Siebel ferries. The enemy therefore presumably uses mines that are not only equipped with period delay mechanism, but also with delay clockwork. We must therefore watch for mines being dropped on the routes, particularly at night, in such a way that the points where they are dropped can be accurately determined and the route altered accordingly until the mine becomes active and can be swept. An attempt will be made to salvage a Russian mine in order to investigate firing mechanism, period delay mechanism, delay clockwork, etc. Group South will request Minelaying Experimental Command to send specialists and divers.

While traffic to the fish-salting works and Taman had to be abandoned because of the heavy seas at the landing stages, ferry traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka was maintained by combined operations craft along the short stretch which is sheltered from the NE wind.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

As a result the Navy's contribution to today's total transportation is relatively small. The figures were:

East-West: 2,603 (429) men, 554 (3) prisoners, 36 (4) wounded, 464 (24) civilians, 359 (13) lorries, 97 (-) personnel motor vehicles, 2,062 (444) horses, 516 (137) horse-drawn vehicles, 37 (-) various motor transport vehicles, 18 (-) trailers, 20 (-) motor cycles, 12 (-) field kitchens, 117 (68) tons of Army supplies.

West-East: 83 (3) men, 373 (307) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

1900 3 naval ferry barges put in to Kerch from the sixth Anapa transport operation with a load of 35 men, 13 lorries, 60 bales of cotton, 2 limbers, 6 tons of supplies for the Armed Forces.

Enemy Air Activity:

There was lively enemy air activity during the day over Kerch Strait and Temriuk. Temriuk was bombed by 3 Russian low-flying planes, 1 bomb hit the lighter "Tina 5" in the bows. This caused a slight leak and she lies aground by the bow. There were repeated raids on Kamish Burun and a total of 39 bombs were dropped. Siebel ferries were damaged by splinters; hits were scored on the Air Force ammunition dump; large stocks of anti-aircraft ammunition and bombs exploded and caught fire. Naval installations were not damaged.

CONFIDENTIAL

15 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No reconnaissance was flown on the night of 15/16 March.

Air reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea did not sight any enemy shipping. Coastal reconnaissance extended as far as Batum and the heavy warships were identified in the bases of Poti and Batum. There was slight traffic in both directions between Ghalenjik and Tuapse. According to the 8th Air Corps the tanker torpedoed by E-boats southeast of Tuapse is still burning 1 km. off the entrance to Tuapse harbor and is aground. Shipping in Ghalenjik was again slight today, totaling about 3,500 tons of merchant shipping, some M.T.B.s and 20 boats. There were approximately 4,000 tons of shipping and 4 coastal vessels at Tuapse, a motor minesweeper and 2 minesweepers on the roads near the burning 7,000 ton tanker.

At 1120 one destroyer and 1 merchant ship of about 2,000 tons were identified northwest of Sochi, at 1140 another destroyer, course southeast, high speed, was southwest of Ochermchiri. On Poti roads at noon there were 2 destroyers, one of them proceeding at high speed on alternating course, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons and 1 minesweeper. North of Batum there was 1 warship, possibly an anti-submarine vessel on an alternating course. Radio survey identified 7 submarines, 4 in the central to western Black Sea, 3 off the east coast. Otherwise the radio picture revealed no enemy activity.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0400 Winds NE, force 7, overcast, poor visibility.

Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait, prevented yesterday by the weather, could not be resumed.

0500 A mine exploded under naval ferry barge F 475 in 45° 13.9' N, 36° 37.1' E, shortly after she had weighed anchor and left her night position to watch for serial minelaying operations. There were 6 killed and 7 survivors.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

The site of the explosion is again on a route which has been in constant use during the past few days and which has, moreover, been frequently checked by minesweeping plane and boats of the FZ-group. Since no mine could possibly have been dropped during the past night in the immediate vicinity of the observation vessel without escaping detection, the mine must have been lying for some time on this route which has been swept and used regularly. This further confirms my view that the Russians are using mines with delay clockwork mechanism (see War Diary 14 March, 1400).

Weather forecast:

0930 Sea area Sevastopol - Novorossisk:  
Winds NE, force 7, gale force up to 9,  
overcast.

Shipments of timber and minesweeping operations could not be carried out in Kerch Strait.

E-boat operations were equally out of the question.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that Commanding General 5th Army H.Q. is expecting enemy forces to shell Anapa during the forthcoming full moon period. He therefore requests increased operations of E-boats and, if possible, of U-boats.

During recent weeks Anapa has been repeatedly shelled at night by enemy naval forces. There is no evidence that the attacking forces were heavier than minesweepers or anti-submarine vessels. On one single occasion it was observed that naval guns of medium caliber were used, but it would be dangerous to conclude from that that the boats were necessarily torpedoboats or destroyers, because Russian minesweepers and other small craft are also fitted with 10 cm. and 7.5 cm. guns. E-boat operations against enemy light forces such as minesweepers, anti-submarine vessels or M.T.B.s, with superior guns and frequently equal speed, offer small prospect of success. While there is no evidence that Russian destroyers have shelled the coast, it is by no means impossible, and I shall therefore attempt to station 2 E-boats in the coastal waters off Anapa as often as forces and commitments allow. Since, however, 6 Italian E-boats are now ready for operations at Theodosia, I shall probably use 2 of them for this task and retain the boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, with their greater radius of action, for further operations off the central Caucasus coast. There are no U-boats available for this purely defensive task.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been informed.

CONFIDENTIAL

In reply to my request for the number of naval ferry barges assigned to the Anapa traffic to be reduced, Army Group A stated that, in view of the Air Force's urgent need for shipping space for conveyance of their bombs and mines to Anapa, such a measure is not yet possible.

The ice is breaking up in Nikolaiev harbor and there is now a channel to Ochakov, so that steamers and lighters with strong tugs can resume traffic to and from Nikolaiev.

2000

Despite the ice, traffic between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka was maintained by combined operations boats.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 1,175 men, 94 prisoners, 477 civilians, 159 lorries, 42 personnel motor vehicles, 674 horses, 549 horse-drawn vehicles, 3 field kitchen trailers, 3 guns, 1 anti-tank gun, 2 repair vans, 5 ambulances, 3 tractors, 41 wounded, 10 motor cycles.

West-East: 31 men, 8 tons of supplies, 11 repair vans.

The Navy did not participate in this transport operation.

The naval ferry barges which left on 14 March for the seventh Anapa transport operation, anchored near Zhelesni Rog in the lee of the coast during the past night and commenced their return passage to Kerch at 1430. They transported 152 bales of cotton, 4 lorries, 2 horse-drawn vehicles, 3 personnel motor vehicles, 2 assault boats, 13 trailers, 3 tons of oil. They again anchored near Zhelesni Rog at about 1730.

The eighth Anapa transport operation planned for today has been postponed 24 hours owing to the weather.

CONFIDENTIAL

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral,  
Black Sea 1-15 March, 1943

Re page 9 March:

Anti-submarine operations by "Ship 19":  
At 0700 on 8 March "Ship 19" put out from Sevastopol on anti-submarine operations immediately off the Crimean coast between Cape Atlama and Cape Chauda. She may have reached that area towards evening. On the morning of 9 March she had already put in to Theodosia. Short-term operations of this kind cannot be successful.

Re page 11 March:

Operations of "Ship 19" as a decoy would have more purpose if they were undertaken with a certain regularity. Either a longer period in submarine-infested areas or a continuous patrol of German convoy routes is suggested.

Re page 12 March:

Since melting ice may have partially dispersed the minefields at the southern exit of Kerch Strait, a chance mine might have penetrated a gap in the minefield.

Re page 12 March:

Re the report of Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla submitted to C-in-C, Navy:

The erroneous impression made on C-in-C, Navy by Commander, U-boat Flotilla's report on German U-boat operations, was clarified by a special note from Commanding Admiral, Naval Group South.

Signed on behalf of Naval Group Command, South,  
Chief of Staff  
Brinkmann.

CONFIDENTIAL

16 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Night reconnaissance planes equipped with Lichtenstein gear examined the area south of the Crimea as far as Tuapse, nothing to report.

No enemy ships were reported in the eastern Black Sea by today's reconnaissance. There was little traffic off the coast in either direction. At 0655 three patrol vessels with 1 minesweeper and 1 merchant ship of approximately 3,000 tons were identified 5 miles south of Tuapse, course NW.

15 miles north of Poti 1 destroyer, motor minesweepers and minesweepers, course northwest, high speed. Off Gudauty 1 freighter of 4,000 tons was proceeding northwestwards at high speed with 2 patrol vessels. At 0820 1 merchant ship of approximately 2,500 tons was sighted with 1 motor minesweeper on a southeasterly course, 10 miles southeast of Adler. Compared with the previous day shipping in port had changed very little.

At 1510 Main Naval D/F Station Constantza reported that 2 or 3 destroyers were probably at sea, most likely proceeding from the southeastern Black Sea to the central and northern east coast. Although lively radio traffic was heard, there was no confirmation of their presence. The radio picture revealed no heavy surface forces. According to radio survey 3 submarines are probably in the central to eastern Black Sea, 3 off the east coast and 3 more in an unidentified position at sea.

Own Situation:

0500 The persistent northeasterly gale prevented the resumption of ferry traffic to Taman and the fish-salting works. Nor could minesweeping operations by the FZ-group and the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch, broken off on 14 March, be resumed. Operations were therefore limited to a checksweep of the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works by a minesweeping plane.

0800 Three naval ferry barges put in to Kerch from the seventh Anapa transport operation. The sailing of the eighth Anapa formation will have to be postponed until 17 March.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

Weather forecast:

- 0930 NE to E winds force 6, increasing to gale force 7, visibility 5 - 7 miles.
- 1200 The minesweeping Ju was obliged to break off its check sweep because of increasingly deteriorating weather conditions. No mines had been swept.
- 1415 Several enemy bombers attacked the channel in to Temriuk. The revenue cutter "Twee" received a direct hit. One enemy plane was shot down by fighters.
- 1630 30th U-Boat Flotilla reported that U 19's departure would have to be postponed by 16 hours because of a crack in the cooling water pipe. The boat will therefore put out from Constantza at 0600 on 17 March.

During anti-submarine operations off the west coast of the Crimea, "Ship 19" was today unsuccessfully attacked 12 miles southeast of Cape Tarkhankutzki by a submarine which fired 2 torpedoes. The torpedoes exploded on land. The heavy seas prevented the submarine from being located with echo ranging set and revolving directional hydrophone gear. It was therefore impossible to continue to maintain contact.

U 24, proceeding off the Turkish coast on passage to her operational area, reported no traffic observed.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

By using the route from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka which is sheltered from the northeast wind, combined operations craft were able to maintain a limited service. Amount transported totaled:

West-East: 643 men, 32 prisoners, 135 civilians, 83 lorries, 31 personnel motor vehicles, 240 horses, 61 horse-drawn vehicles, 14 field kitchens, 7 miscellaneous motor vehicles, 9 motor cycles.

West-East: 46 men, 1 personnel motor vehicle, 3 tons of stores, 1 gun, 350 building clamps, 53 tons of building material, half a ton of fuel, 1 motor cycle.

The Navy took no part in the above shipments.

CONFIDENTIAL

The laying of the projected hawser boom in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait was discussed with the Commander of the Net Defense Group, Black Sea. The following decisions were reached:

1. The hawser boom will be laid between Cape Takil and Cape Panagiya if the necessary materials are forwarded from Germany. Net Defense Group is to send a relevant request.
2. With the materials at present available on the Crimea, a hawser boom 1,000 meters long will be laid in the western part of the entrance between Cape Takil and the minefields already in existence. For this purpose the necessary materials must be transported to Kerch and 1 naval ferry barge converted into a laying vessel.
3. The task is to be performed after work on the anti-torpedo nets at Theodosia and Ivan Baba has been completed and before work is started at Ak Mechet.

Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 vessel of about 500 tons sighted at 0445 proceeding from the landing stage at Novorossisk out to sea. Nothing further to report from the bridgehead.

Simferopol

With reference to the repeated losses caused by mines, and the so far unsuccessful intensive sweeping operations with towed loop gear, noise box (turbines), cracker equipment and minesweeping planes carried out in Kerch Strait, Naval High Command, Operations Division, submitted the following report.

- "1. Enemy use of delay clockwork and period delay mechanism calls for yet further improvement in our countermeasures.
  - a. The narrow swept channel should be closely buoyed.
  - b. Discipline on the routes should be very strictly maintained.
  - c. A watch to be kept on aerial minelaying operations.
  - d. Minesweeping plane and FZ-group should carry out frequent check sweeps.

2. The question of sending down ammunition divers will be investigated."

My comments are as follows:

Re:-

- a. The route from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman was buoyed when the losses occurred. More buoys have been laid in the interim.
- b. Officers in charge of vessels have orders to keep strictly to the buoyed route. Since those in command, mostly boatswain's mates second class, cannot be expected to keep exactly to the routes in poor visibility, I have applied for 10 junior naval officers as group commanders, they have been promised me by Naval High Command and some have been already assigned.
- c. From the time when the evacuation of the Taman Peninsula was begun, naval ferry barges have been posted at night along the mine-free route to watch for aerial minelaying activity. In addition D/F stations have been erected on land.
- d. The short route from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman has been swept daily by FZ boats, weather permitting. In addition to towed loop gear and noise box (turbines), cracker equipment was also used. In recent weeks 2 minesweeping planes covered the route as often as 30 times a day.

Although an unusually large number of minesweeping devices have been employed over a short route, no mines have so far been swept. And yet since 24 February, four vessels have struck mines and sunk. Since the route was closed every time that mines were observed to drop and numerous covering sweeps were made with all available resources, I concluded that the enemy was using mines with period delay mechanism which allowed for a delay of several days (see also War Diary 14 March, 1400 and 15 March, 0500). Even if the route were swept twice as often, it would only lessen the risks, not remove them. With things as they are at present, the only effective method of eliminating the danger is by changing the route when mines have been seen to drop on it. There are limits to this method, however, because few alternative routes can be found in such narrow waters.

CONFIDENTIAL

17 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No enemy ships were sighted during the day's air reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea. There was slight shipping activity in both directions along the Caucasus coast. Ports were examined as far as Batum; shipping was normal. Evaluation of Air Force photographic reconnaissance showed the following ships in Poti at 1020: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in dock, 1 light cruiser "Krasny Krim", 1 large destroyer, 3 other destroyers, 2 torpedoboats, 10 submarines, 3 of them in dock, 1 accommodation ship of 8,500 tons for submarine personnel, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons, 3 of 4,000 tons each, 1 tanker of 7,000 tons, 1 of 2,000 tons, 2 cruiser hulls, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons entering port from the north.

At 1037 photographic reconnaissance of Batum identified: 1 heavy cruiser "Voroshilov", 1 heavy cruiser "Krasny Kavkas" on the roads, 1 S-class destroyer, 2 G-class destroyers, 1 F-class destroyer, 4 submarines, 6 motor minesweepers, 10 M.T.B.s, 1 destroyer hull, 4 tankers of 7,000 tons on the roads, 1 accommodation ship of 9,000 tons on the roads, 1 accommodation ship of 9,000 tons for submarine personnel, 1 passenger ship of 4,000 tons, 2 freighters of 4,000 tons each, 4 of 1,500 tons each, 5 totaling 4,000 tons, 1 small ice-breaker, 2 floating cranes, 6 coastal vessels totaling 4,000 tons, 3 barrage balloons.

These two Air Force photographic surveys again confirmed the presence of 8 destroyers inclusive of the "Kharkov".

Night reconnaissance planes with Lichtenstein gear which combined with the 1st E-Boat Flotilla on the night of 17/18 March, did not identify any enemy ships in coastal waters.

One gunboat and several landing craft were observed by Port Commander, Novorossisk, making out to sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified 1 destroyer west of Novorossisk at 1100 and traced her as far as Ghelenjik. During the evening a bearing was obtained on a submarine on the line Theodosia-Gerze (Turkey).

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

During the night the destroyer reported at 1100 was intercepted off Tuapse, presumably entering port. There were 2 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0600 U 19 put out from Constantza on operations.

Weather forecast:

0930 NE to E winds, force 4 - 5; freshening to 6 in the afternoon.

Thus operations of E-boats and Italian E-boats may be again impossible during the coming night.

1330 Three naval ferry barges put out on the eighth Anapa transport operation with a load of 100 tons of ammunition and 125 tons of stores. The FZ-group, the Harbor Defense Flotilla, motor minesweeper R 30 and 2 minesweeping planes today continued sweeping Kerch Strait. A minesweeping plane swept 1 non-contact mine outside the route in 45° 16' N and 36° 35.5' E. This at least proves that the enemy is using mines with electrical non-contact firing device, a fact which does not, of course, exclude the use of acoustic mines in addition.

1400 According to the morning's weather chart and contrary to the forecast of 0930 the weather will become more settled during the afternoon.

I have therefore decided to send the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats out on operations immediately. In order that as long a line as possible may be occupied off the Caucasus coast, the 8 available boats are to be assigned in pairs to the area between Cape Uchdere and Myshako. U 24 occupies the adjoining area off the coast south of Cape Uchdere so that about 130 miles of the Caucasus coast are evenly divided between 8 E-boats and 1 U-boat.

Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to leave Ivan Baba at 1500 for positions between Tuapse and Uchdere and two more for positions between Tuapse and Cape Idokopas until shortly before daybreak on 18 March.

Two boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla received orders to leave Theodosia at 1530 and take up a lurking position off Myshako during the coming night, while two others are to take up similar positions between Chelenjik and Cape Idokopas.

U 24 was informed.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1540 Motor Minesweepers R 35 and R 36 put in to Theodosia after having completed the task assigned to them. They swept the route from Yalta to Theodosia with cutting kite sweep and 15 meter pendant. An enemy plane fired at the boats at a range of 2,000 meters. No damage caused. The defense put up by the minesweepers was without success. No mines swept.
- 1745 Italian E-boat No. 570 put in to Theodosia again because of engine trouble.
- 1932 E-boat S 26 was obliged to break off operations owing to a breakdown and had to return to Ivan Baba.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The weather improved sufficiently for the ferry traffic to be fully resumed today. The focal point was the fish-salting works. The high seas still running in Taman Bay made loading very difficult at the fish-salting works and Taman.

The enemy Air Force repeatedly bombed and machine-gunned the loading stages, as well as naval ferry barges and combined operations craft on passage. They were not damaged but there were 4 wounded.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,515 (834) men, 120 (102) wounded, 186 prisoners, 130 (59) civilians, 186 (2) lorries, 44 (3) personnel motor vehicles, 1,107 (945) horses, 323 (290) horse-drawn vehicles, 33 (5) other vehicles, 2 planes, 337 (36) tons of supplies, 1,277 bombs.

West-East: 372 (28) men, 4 (2) vehicles, 200 (45) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

- 2300 Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division reported that according to an agent, 34 fast landing craft, 5 torpedoboats, 3 tankers, 4 transports with landing troops, 2 destroyers and 4 submarines left Batum at 1715 on 17 March. They presumably plan to land on the Taman Peninsula or the Crimea.

The naval forces of Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea/Ukraine and Caucasus which are at sea, have been informed.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Air Force has yet to observe assemblies of landing craft in Batum, nor were any sighted today. In reply to an enquiry the 8th Air Corps stated that presence of 34 landing craft at Batum could not be identified in today's aerial photograph. Since the Russian Fleet has only 2 torpedoboats at its disposal, the agent's report is certainly inaccurate in the matter of torpedoboats. On the other hand a large-scale enemy landing operation against the Crimean coast, more especially the Taman coast, now that the Russian offensive against the Gotenkopf position has been brought to a standstill and the attack from the Novorossisk bridgehead has made no further progress, is not unlikely. I have requested the 8th Air Corps to carry out an exhaustive reconnaissance over the entire Caucasus coast, particularly the coastal waters and all the enemy ports, on 18 March as it seems likely that in order to evade air reconnaissance, the enemy formation will only proceed by night, putting in to intermediate ports by day. In view of prevailing weather conditions in the Black Sea and the relatively limited seaworthiness of the landing craft, they are unlikely to proceed at a great distance from the coast.

In the course of the day, planes repeatedly dropped bombs on Anapa. Apart from machine-gunning, 128 bombs were dropped. There were 2 casualties and much damage was done to buildings.

The situation at Novorossisk is unchanged. There was lively exchange of gunfire, we dropped bombs on the enemy bridgehead.

One gunboat and several landing craft were sighted off Kabardinka Bay during the day.

The anti-aircraft defenses of Kerch Strait have been considerably reinforced by the 9th Anti-Aircraft Division, but the fact that several aerial mines have been dropped off the fish-salting works during the past few days should suggest that the enemy obviously does not regard the heavy anti-aircraft batteries as a serious menace. A report of the 8th Air Corps now states that the enemy appears only to pay attention to light or medium anti-aircraft. This tallies with personal experience. I have therefore used the dropping of mines in Kerch Strait as an occasion for requesting the 8th Air Corps to examine the problem of reinforcing the anti-aircraft defenses of the Strait, particularly with medium anti-aircraft guns.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

18 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Between 0400 and 0500 1 merchant ship of 3,000 tons, 3 patrol vessels on a northwesterly course and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons making for the south, were sighted by morning reconnaissance 20 miles south of Chelenjik.

Today's reconnaissance sighted 1 convoy putting out from Chelenjik at 0930. At 1046 two convoys were identified south of Chelenjik, steering northwesterly and southeasterly courses respectively. The convoy sighted at 0930 was shadowed. Despite heavy fighter cover, dive bomber formations sank 1 coastal vessel of about 800 tons and obtained a direct hit on a 1,500 ton vessel. Air Force photographic survey only identified 1 damaged freighter which had run aground about half a mile northwest of Cape Idokopas. After the dive bomber attack, traffic ceased between Chelenjik and Tuapse.

At 1324 Ochomchiri harbor was examined and shipping there was found to be normal, comprising 2,500 tons of merchant shipping, some coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons and 4 submarines. At Tuapse there was a tanker of 7,000 tons on fire. The remaining ports showed little change. Shipping at Sochi was slight.

Night reconnaissance with Lichtenstein gear identified no shipping south of the Crimea as far as the Caucasus coast on the night of 18 March.

Port Commander Novorossisk reported 1 gunboat and 1 M.F.B. in Zemeskaya Bay.

Main Naval D/F Station identified 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, which, according to radio traffic, was still at sea on the morning of 19 March. In addition 2 submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 1 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0130 The battery at Takil observed mines being dropped in the southern part of Kerch Strait. As the mines seemed to have fallen on or very near the swept channel from Pavlovski to Takil, orders were issued for the route to be closed.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-60-

245



CONFIDENTIAL

0800 Three Italian E-boats put in to Theodosia from night operations. Because Italian E-boat No. 570 could not continue, the Italian Flotilla was obliged to abandon its double line patrol and, consequently, the positions near Myshako. From 2030 to 0315 the 3 remaining boats took up lurking positions near Cape Idokopas. No shipping was observed and no patrol encountered.

The freighters sighted by air reconnaissance from 0420 to 0440 this morning between Ghelenjik and Tuapse on northwesterly and easterly courses respectively, passed the position occupied by the Italian E-boats 1 hour after they had left it to start their return passage. The freighters did not put out from Tuapse and Chelenjik, the ports of departure, until shortly before daybreak, as the enemy is aware that our E-boats must leave their attack areas off the coast half an hour before dawn.

Weather forecast:

0930 South coast of the Crimea and north Caucasus coast, NE to E winds, force 5, visibility 10 miles, temperature + 8.

0940 E-boats S 47, S 72 and S 28 returned to Ivan Baba. The disablement of S 26 forced Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla to abandon using his craft in groups of two and they had to leave the attack area between Tuapse and Cape Idokopas. From 2220 until 0230 the boats lay in grid square CL 9187 southeast of Tuapse. S 28 torpedoed a lighter of about 500 tons lying off the mouth of the Shacke. The Flotilla Commander reported that it may have been a wreck that was torpedoed. No other shipping or patrol activity was encountered. At approximately 0700 on the return passage the E-boats were attacked with rocket bombs by an enemy flying boat, type MBR 624. These hit the water far astern of the E-boats. Our defensive fire was without success.

In reply to an enquiry submitted to the 8th Air Corps it was stated that, so far, air reconnaissance had not identified a wreck off the mouth of the Schacke and that no wreck had been on that spot in the wreck chart kept by the Air Force. E-boat S 28 must have torpedoed a vessel lying at anchor. The 8th Air Corps was requested to try and obtain more detailed information in the course of their daily coastal reconnaissance.

CONFIDENTIAL

1140 The 8th Air Corps reported that the 7,000 ton tanker, torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, was towed in to Tuapse still burning. For several days efforts were made to refloat her after she went aground 1,000 meters off the harbor approach to Tuapse, and now they have apparently succeeded. That the tanker will ever be used again seems most unlikely.

Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 36 swept the new coastal route from Theodosia to Yalta with oropesa gear and 15 meter pendant. No mines swept.

The eighth Anapa transport operation took place today according to plan. After unloading, the naval ferry barges started on their return passage to Kerch at 1300. The goods transported comprised 1 ambulance, 7 personnel motor vehicles, 1 lorry, 6 horses, 200 cans of oil.

The ninth Anapa transport operation planned for today will have to be postponed for 24 hours because of the closing of the route in Kerch Strait.

1730 The closed route between Cape Takil and Pavlovski was twice swept by motor minesweeper R 30 with oropesa gear, and by the tender "Grafenau" with towed loop gear and noise box (turbines). No mines swept.

The FZ-groups were unable to operate because of the weather.

A minesweeping Ju plane made 30 covering sweeps to a breadth of 120 meters but swept no mines. Orders have been given for the route to be re-opened.

Two minesweeping Ju planes have covered the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works 34 times over both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

1800 Today's air reconnaissance over the sea and off the Caucasus coast sighted nothing of the enemy formation which, according to an agent's report, put out from Batum at 1715 on 17 March.

Today's air reconnaissance reported shipping activity and shipping in port to be normal. There was no evidence of any special enemy plans.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic to the fish-salting works was resumed at approximately 0400 today in favorable weather. Towards noon the wind freshened from E to NE, force 6, which handicapped unloading operations, particularly at the landing stage of the fish-salting works, so that traffic to Taman had to be diverted. The time wasted meant that transportation figures for the day were only:

East-West: 2,691 (898) men, 235 (36) civilians, 1,042 prisoners, 304 (23) lorries, 43 (4) personnel motor vehicles, 518 (326) horse-drawn vehicles, 40 (4) other vehicles, (70) tons of service supplies, (30) tons of bombs, (3,000) empty barrels, 1,808 (1,040) horses, 22 (20) draft animals.

West-East: 267 (21) men, 1 lorry, (32) motor cycles, (1) ambulance, 105 tons of railway stock, 7 (2) tons of building material, (100) tons of stone, 193.5 (104) tons of supplies. (Navy's figures in brackets.)

CONFIDENTIAL

19 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance during the night of 19/20 March located no ships from the southeastern Crimea to the Caucasus coast. Despite good visibility daylight reconnaissance identified only slight shipping activity in coastal waters. Various factors prevented the harbors from being completely examined. At Poti there was fighter cover, at Batum bad visibility, and engine trouble prevented the plane from examining the other harbors.

At 0720 a convoy, consisting of the destroyers reported yesterday at Tuapse, 1 merchant ship of 4,000 tons and 4 motor minesweepers, put out from Tuapse on a southeasterly course. An aircraft shadower maintained contact and at 0730 reported that the convoy was putting up a smoke screen.

At 0457 on 19 March twelve small boats, presumably M.T.B.s, were identified in Ghelenjik roads and in the bay. Such lively traffic of small craft at Ghelenjik which is a target area for our aerial mines, suggests minesweeping operations.

Photographic evaluation detected the following shipping at Tuapse:

1 tanker of 7,000 tons newly arrived from Batum, 1 tanker of 7,000 tons still burning, (wreck), 1 merchant ship of 2,000 tons, 1 minesweeper and several coastal vessels. At 1030, off the harbor there were 3 tankers each of 7,000 tons, 1 of them with steam up, in addition 1 transport of 9,000 tons and 1 freighter of 1,500 tons with 1 patrol vessel making for Batum.

0940 Port Commander, Novorossisk observed 1 small merchant ship of 400 tons and at 1110 one submarine leaving the jetty to make out to sea. The destroyer reported by Main Naval D/F Station on 18 March was, on the forenoon of 19 March, off the central east coast and at 0953, 15 miles southwest of Tuapse.

0930 Another destroyer was in the Tuapse/Cape Adler area. During the day a third destroyer and 1 submarine were identified between the central and southern east coast.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0500 E to SE winds, force 5 - 6, temperature + 7°, visibility good.

The resumption of the Constantza - Sevastopol convoys, the other convoys and timber transportations off the Crimean coast had to be postponed for another 24 hours.

Traffic across Kerch Strait was very handicapped by the high seas at the landing stages of the fish-salting works and Taman. Only by making use of every boat and by risking damage to the piers was the traffic maintained at all. The work of this traffic, principally on the Kerch-fish-salting works-Taman route followed by the naval ferry barges, has now been affected for 6 days by strong easterly winds which have hindered and, at times, prevented boats from drawing alongside at Taman and the fish-salting works, even with the help of tugs. On the other hand traffic on the Yenikale - Kossa Tuzla route, assigned to combined operations craft, was maintained under more favorable conditions.

According to Army Group A, the shipment of supplies from west to east will in future be the principal task of ferry traffic across Kerch Strait. Two hundred tons must be shipped daily to Kossa Chuchka, 300 tons to Senaya, 400 tons to Taman, 250 tons to Anapa. When ice conditions improve in the northern entrance to Kerch Strait 400 tons must be sent to Tomriuk. Because on an average, there are ten days of every month when supply traffic has to be canceled as a result of the weather or of routes being closed when mines are suspected, craft sufficient to transport 1,800 tons (excluding Tomriuk) daily must be maintained.

This must be accomplished by the naval ferry barges operating in Kerch Strait and the tugs and lighters available or in course of transfer, even if additional timber and stone, reserves or leave personnel have also to be shipped. Army Group A was informed that if these supply operations were taken on, the service for the evacuation of the Taman Peninsula was bound to be affected as a result of the time lost loading and unloading supplies.

1600 Two naval ferry barges put in to Kerch from Theodosia with 216 tons of timber.

1910 Minesweeping planes operated over the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works, making 15 covering runs with four-fold breadth of sweep, and over the route from Pavlovski to Cape Takil, making 39 covering runs with double breadth of sweep. No mines were swept.

Enemy air activity:

A bomber and 6 fighters made a low-level attack on Senaya, dropping 5 bombs. They caused no damage. Two bombers dropped 2 bombs on the fish-salting works, again causing no damage. A P2 plane tried to penetrate to Ivan Baba but was forced off by the anti-aircraft.

Air reconnaissance reported that the tanker torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla on the night of 12 March and later towed in to Tuaepe, is still on fire.

Nothing to report from Novorossisk apart from the usual gunfire.

At approximately 0940, according to Port Commander, Novorossisk, one coastal freighter of 400 tons was sighted and at 1110, one submarine putting to sea from the landing stage.

I am taking certain extra measures in addition to the already extensive preparations for demolition at Novorossisk harbor. In order that in the event of an evacuation, the Russians will find it extremely difficult to get the port in working order again and also to use the still remaining landing stages, I have given orders that:

The inner side of the west mole and the quays not completely destroyed are to be mined with TMB mines. These will be sunk right at the foot of the mole so that they will simultaneously destroy vessels drawing alongside and damage the mole. They will be laid at intervals of approximately 100 meters. The necessary material will be transported from Kerch to Anaps to await further transportation to the north at the earliest opportunity.

On the night of 18/19 March the 8th Air Corps again laid aerial mines in the entrance of Chelenjik Bay. On 19 March, air reconnaissance identified several small vessels proceeding at high speed in line abreast, apparently minesweeping. Several explosions were heard at regular intervals. They may not have been mines however, but depth charges with which the enemy endeavors to sweep the FZ mines.

2200      Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 3,114 (663) men, 223 prisoners,  
79 civilians, 235 (30) lorries,  
66 (8) personnel motor vehicles,  
1,754 (721) horses, 475 (162)  
horse-drawn vehicles, 38 field  
kitchens, 49 other vehicles,  
4 lighting plants, 15 (1) guns,  
(5) heavy mortars, 9 motor cycles,  
14 (1) draft animals, 2 tons of  
field mail.

West-East: 200 (4) men, 2 lorries, 3 (1)  
personnel motor vehicles, 275  
tons of ammunition, 72 (64) tons  
of stores, 3 tons of field  
mail, 60 tons of rail material,  
170 tons of fuel, 4 tons of  
building material.

(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The naval ferry barges on return passage from Anapa since noon on 18 March, put in to Theodosia on account of the weather. Their Commander reported that on the night of 18 March, while the barges lay at anchor near Cape Panagiya, the sound of several M.T.B. engines was heard in the immediate vicinity. There were no E-boats at sea; presumably, therefore, the enemy sent out his M.T.B.s against the naval ferry barges which have recently taken to anchoring off Cape Panagiya at night during their passage to and from Anapa, but on this occasion failed to locate them lying well in to the coast.

Since the enemy will probably repeat these M.T.B. operations, the anchorage must either be moved a long way off or constantly changed. Relevant orders have been sent to Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla.

CONFIDENTIAL

20 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In the Trabzon area air reconnaissance sighted 1 Turkish freighter and 1 passenger ship. There was no shipping off the east coast between Ghelenjik and Adler, only slight activity was identified off the southern east coast. There were 2 coastal vessels off Gudcuty, 1 freighter with 2 patrol vessels on a southeasterly course off Ochemchiri. At 0833 shipping in Ghelenjik was slight, about 3,000 tons of merchant shipping. Minesweeping activity again recognized in the area where aerial minelaying has been attempted. The 7,000 ton tanker identified for the first time in Tuapse yesterday, today returned to Batum again, a fact confirmed by photographic evaluation. All the heavy ships were identified in their bases. Photographic evaluation revealed very heavy concentrations of merchant shipping at Poti, approximately 37,000 tons, 9,000 tons of which were tankers.

Planes equipped with Lichtenstein gear flew night reconnaissance southeast of the Crimea and off the Caucasus coast as far as Tuapse, without result.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported lively activity of small craft off the central east coast. The Air Force intercepted very little traffic in this area. Four submarines were identified in the central to western Black Sea. The radio picture revealed no further surface force activity.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0930 NE to E winds, force 5 - 6, freshening to 7 - 8 during the afternoon, visibility good, temperature  $\pm 4^{\circ}$ .

Convoys are in harbor ready to sail but no operations possible in this weather. Anapa transport operations and FZ-group operations also held up.

1045 To prevent the barges and piers from being damaged, ferry traffic was restricted this morning because of the northeasterly wind, force 5, which later forced us to cancel all traffic on the route between Kerch, the fish-

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-68-

253



CONFIDENTIAL

salting works and Taman. Traffic from Yenikale to Kossa Chuchka continued until, at about 1400, it was brought to a standstill by heavy drift ice from the Sea of Azov.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 1,858 (576) men, 60 wounded, 150 men on leave, 151 prisoners, 47 (4) civilians, 1,481 (515) horses, 430 (183) horse-drawn vehicles, 14 draft animals, 87 (5) lorries, 30 (9) personnel motor vehicles, 52 (7) miscellaneous vehicles, 20 (2) motor cycles, 80 tons of supplies, 200 barrels of oil.

West-East: 392 men, 5 lorries, 3 personnel motor vehicles, 3 miscellaneous vehicles, 12 tons of ammunition, 160 rounds of 12.2 cm. artillery ammunition, (217) tons of timber, 46 tons of wood for building, (40) tons of building materials, (15) tons of field mail, (50) drums of cable.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The 3 naval ferry barges which put in to Theodosia yesterday from the 8th Anapa transport operation were prevented by heavy seas from proceeding to Kerch. At 1100 the barges anchored in the lee of the land near Cape Chauda.

The route from Kerch to the fish-salting works was checked 8 times by 2 minesweeping planes to a breadth of 240 meters, on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

Apart from the usual exchanges of gunfire and enemy raids on the southern part of Novorossisk there was nothing to report.

Enemy paratroops came down north of Anapa. Five were taken prisoner, the rest escaped. Their instructions were to fix demolition charges with time fuses to naval ferry barges in Anapa and Taman. All offices concerned were advised and instructed to take the necessary precautions immediately.

Air photographs of Tuapse showed that the tanker which was torpedoed and towed in to port there, is still on fire.

Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 36 swept the route from Sevastopol to Balaklava and back with oropesa gear. There was nothing to report on their return passage, they escorted the "Perovolyka" from Balaklava to Sevastopol.

21 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The day's air reconnaissance identified no shipping in the southeastern Black Sea, only slight activity off the Caucasus coast, mainly patrol vessels. Fighter cover prevented Batum and the mouth of the Chobi from being examined.

Air photographs of Ghelenjik at 0700 showed 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 2 freighters each of 800 tons, 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons, 16 M.T.B.s, 2 motor minesweepers and 30 to 40 boats. The preponderance of M.T.B.s and small craft is striking. Presumably supply ships are not at present calling at Ghelenjik because the enemy has either observed or learnt that the approach to the bay is mined. The large number of small vessels suggests intensive minesweeping activity.

Tuapse was examined at 0730. There were 2 merchant ships of 1,500 tons each in port, 1 merchant ship of 800 tons, 3 coastal vessels, 2 motor minesweepers and several boats.

Air photographs of Sochi at 0745 revealed 4 motor minesweepers, 2 freighters totaling 2,300 tons, 1 motor minesweeper and 1 M.T.B. both putting out. 0810 at Sukhum there were 15 boats and 1 coastal vessel, course north-west. 0825 at Ochemchiri there were 5 submarines, 5 motor minesweepers, 2 submarine escorts totaling 3,000 tons, 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons. Compared with yesterday's photograph of Poti, today's showed 1 tanker of 7,000 tons and 1 destroyer leaving port.

There were 2 coastal vessels off Cape Adler and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons off Ochemchiri.

On the night of 21/22 March no ships were located by night reconnaissance planes with Lichtenstein gear.

Main Naval D/F Station detected no heavy surface forces. On the other hand 9 submarines were intercepted at sea, 4 probably in the central to western Black Sea and 5 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Crimea and north Caucasus coast; NE winds,

CONFIDENTIAL

force 7 - 8, visibility approximately 15 miles, temperature between 0 and + 5°.

Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait and all other tasks had to be postponed again because of the weather.

Transportation figures for the day were: (vessels which arrived on the evening of 20 March and were unloaded today).

East-West: 41 leave personnel, 555 men, 4 wounded, 34 prisoners, 24 civilians, 55 lorries, 9 personnel motor vehicles, 232 horses, 81 horse-drawn vehicles, 2 field kitchens, (2) Fieseler Storch planes, (50) tons of bombs, (150) tons of service supplies, 15 motor cycles.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

West-East: No shipments.

Nothing to report from Novorossisk except that positions in the east harbor were shelled, situation at the enemy bridgehead unchanged. There was enemy air activity between 1745 and 1930. Planes raided the Kerch area 8 times, dropping about 50 bombs; eighteen high explosives and several incendiaries fell on the city itself, naval installations escaped damage. At 1840 five bombs were dropped on Taman but no damage was caused.

The total numbers brought over to date from the "Gotenkopf" bridgehead, exclusive of air-borne transportation, i.e. shipped across by naval landing craft and combined operations craft on the east-west route, are:

71,854 men,  
15,866 prisoners,  
13,664 civilians,  
42,979 horses,  
10,820 horse-drawn vehicles,  
6,834 motor vehicles (including 4,800 lorries).

Referring to the above shipments in the situation report to Army High Command, Army Group A stated that these totals had been achieved under exceedingly difficult conditions; not only had mines and air attacks been a constant threat, but there had been ice and bad weather to contend with. These handicaps had been overcome by

CONFIDENTIAL

making full use of combined operations craft, naval landing craft and air cover, furthermore individual crews and maintenance parties at the landing stages had collaborated to the full in a spirit of friendly rivalry in order to obtain the best results.

The Navy's contribution to the above total was:

23,702 men,  
2,878 civilians,  
2,891 prisoners,  
19,289 horses,  
5,285 horse-drawn vehicles,  
1,023 motor vehicles (including 761 lorries).

CONFIDENTIAL

22 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The day's routine air reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea had nothing to report. The Caucasus coast and harbors including Poti were examined and photographed. Adverse weather and fighter cover prevented Batum from being examined. No shipping was observed between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. A convoy consisting of 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 1 minesweeper and 3 M.T.B.s put in to Tuapse at 0630 coming from a southeasterly direction. Southeast of Tuapse there was 1 merchant ship of about 1,000 tons on a northwesterly course and another of 1,000 tons on a southeasterly course.

Photographic evaluation identified 1 freighter of about 2,500 tons with clipper stem at Sukhum; at 0720 1 merchant ship of 2,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 2 minesweepers, 2 coastal vessels, and 1 destroyer in Ochemchiri. At 1200 in Poti apart from the usual heavy ships, 3 merchant ships of up to 3,000 tons and 1 destroyer presumably putting in to port were off the harbor entrance. Shipping in the other ports was normal and showed little change.

At 2050 Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 1 M.T.B. and at 2150 1 patrol vessel and 2 freighters of about 700 tons making for the landing stage.

One plane equipped with Lichtenstein gear carried out night reconnaissance but located nothing.

At 2205 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located 1 submarine some 60 miles south of Cape Takil. According to a D/F report, at 2250 the same boat stood about 125 miles west of Tuapse. In addition 2 submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast. There were no surface units in the radio picture.

Own Situation:

0600 Shortly after dropping anchor for the night, the naval ferry barges of the eighth Anapa transport operation lying near Cape Chauda were attacked by a submarine. From a submerged position the submarine fired 4 torpedoes,

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

2 of which passed under the ferry barges. The submarine surfaced for about 20 seconds after the attack and was immediately fired on by the naval ferry barges. Hits scored on the submarine with 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns were observed. It was probably the vibration caused by firing the fan-of-four which forced the submarine to the surface because she immediately submerged when fired upon. The barges dropped depth charges at the point where she submerged, apparently without result. Since there is at present no vessel suitable for anti-submarine operations in the south Crimean ports, I have requested the 8th Air Corps to carry out anti-submarine operations off Cape Chauda and, assuming that the boat was damaged by the 2 cm. anti-aircraft, to search more especially for oil patches.

Weather forecast:

0930 Winds NE, force 5, visibility good, temperature 0°.

1400 Two naval ferry barges put out for the ninth Anapa transport operation. The third naval ferry barge, prepared and loaded, had to remain behind because of a defective screw. The ferry barges transported 30 tons of stores, 50 tons of ammunition, 50 tons of bombs, 15 tons of mail, 8 tons of artillery equipment.

The route to Senaya was buoyed today. Russian buoys with red topmarks were laid on the route from Taman to the fish-salting works in order to make it more visible to the minesweeping planes.

A minesweeping plane checked the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works in 9 covering runs to a breadth of 200 meters on each side of the line of buoys. No mines swept. The weather prevented the FZ boats from sweeping with towed loop gear.

Enemy Air Activity:

In addition to an attack on a convoy and on the landing stage at Taman at 1755, 15 bombs were dropped on Akburna. No damage caused. At 2035 a plane raided Ivan Baba, was fired on by anti-aircraft, but no bombs were dropped.

30th U-Boat Flotilla reported the provisional dates by which the 3 newly transferred U-boats will be ready for action: U 18 on 5 May, U 20 on 5 June, U 23 on 19 June.

CONFIDENTIAL

There were only slight exchanges of gunfire at Novorossisk during the last 24 hours. The enemy shelled installations in the eastern and northern parts of the harbor and the northern sector of Novorossisk South. No damage to naval installations. The situation in the southern sector is unchanged.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

At first during the morning, ferry traffic to the fish-salting works took place under more favorable weather conditions, but later on there were northeasterly winds to contend with freshening to 5. The day's results were again affected by difficulties at the landing stages. Transport operations today concentrated on supplies from west to east, using 9 naval ferry barges.

About 1500, some 4 - 5 miles northwest of Taman, a convoy consisting of the tug "Braunkohle 8" and the lighter L 34 was attacked by a plane. A bomb from a plane flying at low level hit the lighter and set it on fire; it exploded shortly afterwards. The boat was loaded with 246 tons of ammunition, 255 tons of preserved fodder, 112 tons of hay, 24 tons of motor oil. Of the crew 1 non-commissioned officer, 2 men from the escort detachment, 4 Rumanians and 1 Russian woman are missing.. The tug "Braunkohle 8" was slightly damaged.

Naval ferry barge F 331, lying by the bridge at Taman, was slightly damaged by bombs in the same attack. There were no casualties. Our fighters went up to intercept them and shot down 1 enemy plane.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 1,958 (257) men, 67 prisoners, 293 (16) civilians, 97 (3) lorries, 43 personnel motor vehicles, 13 trailers, 15 tractors, 10 motor cycles, 1,138 (279) horses, 15 draft animals, 278 (75) horse-drawn vehicles, 22 field kitchens, (40) tons of service supplies.

West-East: 1,721 (57) men, 28 (8) lorries, 10 (7) personnel motor vehicles, 6 trailers, 17 tractors, 2 motor cycles, 2 guns, 461 (346) tons of ammunition, 8 horses, 3 horse-drawn vehicles, 1,264 (1,151) tons of various supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

CONFIDENTIAL

23 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The day's air reconnaissance was hampered by the weather; some harbors were only partially surveyed. The weather prevented a reconnaissance of Poti and Batum. There was only slight traffic off the entire east coast during the day. One eastward bound coastal vessel was sighted off Trabzon during the day.

Reconnaissance flown in the early morning detected no signs of the enemy off the coast between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Later on, south of Ghelenjik, ships in tow were identified on a northwesterly course. At 0740 one merchant ship of 2,500 tons with 2 motor minesweepers put out from Sukhum. Off Ochemchiri harbor there were 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,000 tons at anchor, 1 minesweeper on a southeasterly course.

Night reconnaissance planes did not take off on account of the weather. At 1615 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza identified 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, probably between the central and western east coast. Cruiser "D" was intercepted at 2040, presumably off the central east coast. Otherwise no activity of the large units was revealed in the radio survey. There were 6 submarines at sea, 4 in the central to western Black Sea, 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0930 South Crimean - north Caucasus coast, NE winds, force 6, squally, abating towards evening, snow showers, visibility 5 - 10 miles, day temperature - 5°, at night dropping to - 8°.

In view of the weather, ferry traffic in Kerch Strait on the very exposed route from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman has had to be canceled again. Traffic of combined operations craft to Kosse Chuchka was handicapped by drift ice from the Sea of Azov but it was maintained. It will be impossible to call at Senaya before 25 March because the landing stages need repairing.

The naval ferry barges which left Kerch at 1400 on 22 March on the ninth Anapa transport operation

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION



CONFIDENTIAL

anchored in the lee of Cape Opuk, since the northeasterly wind, force 6, made it impossible to anchor off Cape Takil.

At 0430 three M.T.B.s approached the formation lying at anchor. We immediately opened fire with 2 cm. anti-aircraft and 7.5 guns and they turned away at a range of 1,500 meters, disappearing from sight in an easterly direction.

Although the Russian M.T.B.s did not use their guns, presumably because the seas were too rough, they were nevertheless able to put to sea in weather which keeps German and Italian E-boats in harbor. According to the commander of the group, the Russian boats were completely covered with heavy seas washing right over them at times.

Minesweeping operations:

The heavy sea prevented the FZ boats and the Harbor Defense Flotilla from putting out. The minesweeping planes checking for standard mines over the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works swept one mine in 45° 18.6' N and 36° 31' E. After 2 covering runs the planes had to break off minesweeping operations because of the weather.

1500

A Ju 52 came down on the water near Eltigen. The plane drifted as far as Cape Takil by 1730. Crew rescued by an air-sea rescue plane. Two FZ boats which left Kerch to render assistance put in again at 2000. The boats failed to find the plane in the rough seas.

Work on the anti-torpedo net barrages for the protection of the steamer mooring berths has been completed.

U 23 proceeding down the Danube, arrived in Galatz today.

It was reported from Novorossisk that the situation in the southern infantry sector is unchanged. There were artillery exchanges but otherwise nothing to report.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,539 (452) men, 9 prisoners,  
75 civilians, 103 (10) lorries,  
30 (9) personnel motor vehicles,  
3 guns, 2 tanks, 6 tractors,

CONFIDENTIAL

12 motor cycles, 357 (79) horse-drawn vehicles, 23 field kitchens, 304 (264) tons of service supplies, 1,190 (215) horses, 16 (14) draft animals, 400 parachutes.

West-East: 188 (50) men, 4 (3) lorries, 3 personnel motor vehicles, 397 (105) tons of supplies, 300 telegraph posts.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

Two combined operations ferries and 2 combined operations craft sprang leaks as a result of a collision. They will be out of action for about 4 days.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

24 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

No enemy ships were sighted during daylight reconnaissance over the south-eastern Black Sea. Coastal reconnaissance and a survey of the ports were carried out in varying visibility as far as Batum. At 0700 there was no enemy traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse.

The heavy warships, 1 light cruiser and 4 destroyers were sighted in the bases of Poti and Batum. Both the Air Force and the Main Naval D/F Station failed to intercept the 4 missing destroyers.

No traffic was identified off the northern east coast. At 0810, 10 miles south of Gudauty, 1 freighter of about 2,500 tons with clipper stem and 2 patrol vessels were sighted on a southeasterly course. At 1255 three guard-boats steering alternating courses were in Poti roads. A submarine chaser was suspected off Ochemchiri at 1305 and at 1337 a second one south of Gagri on course 210°.

According to photographic evaluation a freighter of about 1,000 tons lay stopped south of Ghelenjik. On Batum roads 4 tankers, each 6 - 7,000 tons, were again identified.

Air photograph of Ghelenjik revealed about 5,000 tons of merchant shipping, 1 minesweeper, 4 motor minesweepers, 18 M.T.B.s and about 50 boats. Shipping in other harbors was normal.

Night reconnaissance planes with Lichtenstein gear located no traffic.

At 0930 one submarine was identified on the line Theodosia-Sochi. Five submarines were intercepted in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast. Otherwise Naval D/F Station Constantza detected no movements of heavy surface forces.

The 7,000 ton tanker torpedoed by the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, which disappeared from Tuapse after 20 March, has not been sighted since by our air reconnaissance.

Own Situation:

0600 With a NE wind at force 6, ferry traffic across Kerch Strait to the fish-salting works and Taman had to be canceled, since recent experience has shown that naval ferry barges run a great risk at the unprotected landing stages. We cannot afford to lose any more boats (at present 14 barges are out of action and 6 only partially operational). The landing stages at Senaya which are more protected in a northeasterly wind, will not be finished until 25 March, so that traffic cannot proceed there until 26 March.

The crossing to Kossa Chuchka was again effected today by combined operations ferries and landing craft. The ice barrier north of the landing stages protects them from the heavy seas.

Weather forecast:

0930 NE winds, force 6 - 5, varying cloud, visibility 10 to 15 miles.

The naval ferry barges at readiness for the Anapa transports (two in Theodosia and one in Kerch), still cannot proceed in this weather. Convoy and escort duties will again have to be postponed for 24 hours. Only the freight towing vessel "Theben" and the tanker "Moselia", escorted by 2 naval ferry barges, put out from Theodosia for Yalta. The passage was made despite the weather, since the Yaila Mountains break the northeasterly winds coming from the land.

Minesweeping operations:

A minesweeping plane swept the route from Kerch to Taman, making 3 covering runs to a width of 750 meters on either side of the line of buoys. No mines swept. The heavy seas prevented the FZ-groups and the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch from operating.

Enemy Air Activity:

Bombs were dropped on Temriuk during the morning. The naval installations were not damaged.

There were the usual exchanges of gunfire at Novorossisk. The harbor and the south of the town were shelled. Two men belonging to Port Commander 16 were wounded. The situation at the bridgehead is unchanged.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Transportation figures for the day were:

- East-West: 1,430 men, 12 prisoners,  
20 civilians, 298 lorries,  
52 personnel motor vehicles,  
665 horses, 208 horse-drawn  
vehicles, 11 field kitchens,  
28 trailers, 2 minesweepers,  
140 empty barrels, 1 tank wagon,  
1 radio van, 12 tractors,  
8 draft animals, 33 motor cycles,  
3 tanks, 11 wounded.
- West-East: 119 men, 3 lorries, 4 personnel  
motor vehicles, 21.5 tons of  
building material, 250 tons of  
ammunition, 56 tons of fuel,  
7.5 tons of rations, 1 motor cycle.  
(The Navy played no part.)

A conference took place with Lieut. Commander Lutterer and Lieut. Commander Amberger of the Net Defense Formation about the proposed hawser boom across the southern exit of Kerch Strait. (See War Diary 16 March.) Lieut. Commander Lutterer reported that, owing to the present shortage, it is impossible to say when the necessary materials will be ready, since stocks at home have been almost exhausted for mine-fields in other theaters of war. In particular it will take months to obtain the necessary shackles and thimbles, if at all possible. Since the barrage was planned as an immediate safety measure for the defense of Kerch Strait, I am compelled to look for another solution and have decided to lay:

- a. a net barrage from the northwest point of Cape Tuzla to Pavlovski,
- b. a net barrage from the southeast point of Kossa Tuzla to Cape Tuzla,
- c. an anti-torpedo net off Kamish Burun harbor,
- d. a hawser boom 1,000 meters long in the southern exit to Kerch Strait between our own mine field and the supply route.

These barrages will protect the supply route from Kerch to Taman, Kerch roads and the fish-salting works from the penetration of M.T.B.s and from torpedoes fired from a distance by M.T.B.s lying south of Kossa Tuzla. Since the harbor defense barrage at Kamish Burun

CONFIDENTIAL

will protect the vessels there, M.T.B.s entering Kerch Strait at night will no longer find any targets. (To try to pass through Kerch Strait south of Kossa Tuzla by night is at present out of the question because of the mine situation.)

Work on the above barrages can start at once with materials available in the Crimea and intended for Ak Mechet. The laying of the harbor defense barrages at Ak Mechet and Eupatoria will have to be postponed and fresh material requested.

25 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance over the south-eastern Black Sea was without result. The Caucasus coast and harbors were surveyed as far as Tuapse. There has been no report of the area from Tuapse to Batum since the reconnaissance planes have not returned. Shipping at Ghelenjik and Tuapse was normal.

At 0420, 15 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, there were 2 landing craft, 1 tug and 2 lighters on a northwesterly course. About 10 miles south of Ghelenjik there were 3 landing craft and 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons, on a southeasterly course. A reconnaissance plane shadowed the vessels reported. At 0845 one motor minesweeper was sighted off Ghelenjik on a southeasterly course.

Nothing was located by night reconnaissance planes with Lichtenstein gear.

At 1841 Main Naval D/F Station located 1 submarine south of Theodosia, at 1911 the same boat was roughly about 35 miles south of Theodosia. No movements of the heavy units were detected in the radio survey. Apart from the submarine south of the Crimea there was only 1 submarine off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0500 The weather improved slightly. The NE wind abated from 5 to 4.

Ferry traffic across Kerch Strait took place despite considerable difficulties at the landing stages. Naval ferry barges concentrated on traffic from west to east in accordance with the request of Army Group A. From now on total daily shipments must average 1,500 tons. This is bound to cause a drastic reduction in the amount transported from east to west because loading and unloading at Kerch or the east side take so much time that the ferry barges can only make the passage once daily.

With the improved weather conditions, the steamer convoys which have been lying ready in Constantza and Sevastopol for several days,

sailed today. "Ardeal" was escorted from Constantza to Sevastopol by motor minesweeper R 165 and 2 Rumanian destroyers. "Lola" and "Varna" left Sevastopol for Constantza escorted by motor minesweepers R 163 and R 164 and 1 destroyer. In addition "Ship 19" escorted the accommodation ship of the FZ-group which is now going to be converted into a submarine chaser, from Sevastopol to Sulina.

At about 0430 1 ocean-going tug with a lighter of about 300 tons and 3 M.T.B.s were sighted leaving the landing stage. Activity at Novorossisk was again confined to exchanges of gunfire.

During the afternoon Taman was repeatedly bombed by enemy planes. There were some casualties and certain Army installations were damaged. There was also lively enemy reconnaissance activity.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Loading at Taman had to be stopped at 1430 because the eastnortheasterly wind was increasing to as much as force 7.

Traffic to the fish-salting works was maintained.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,550 (423) men, 67 wounded, 123 prisoners, 40 civilians, 29 draft animals, 267 (3) lorries, 19 personnel motor vehicles, 393 (111) horse-drawn vehicles, 53 (2) other vehicles, 2 tanks, 17 motor cycles, 30 (2) guns, 237 empty barrels, 1,329 (357) horses.

West-East: 590 (42) men, (2) civilians, 15 (11) lorries, 45 tons of railway goods, 9 tons of hospital equipment, 264 tons of bulk fodder, 12 tons of building materials, (54) tons of service supplies, 236 tons of fuel, (15) tons of mail, (480) tons of stone, 392 (382) tons of rations, (130) tons of grain, (1) hut, 1 motor cycle.

(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The Anapa transports and minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait have not yet been resumed. A minesweeping Ju plane checked the route from Kerch to Taman without result.



CONFIDENTIAL

Since persistent bad weather has seriously delayed convoys and several steamers are lying in harbor ready to sail, I have turned over the two boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla used for minesweeping duties off the Crimean coast to the Commander Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, as an additional escort for the convoy comprising the steamers "Succeava" and "Charkov", on condition that they are immediately returned to the Crimea as soon as the operation is completed.

The anti-aircraft defenses in Kerch Strait are quite inadequate for the protection of the landing stages and naval ferry barges in transit. Low-level attacks by Russian planes have repeatedly caused serious losses. The anti-aircraft defenses have likewise failed to prevent the frequent aerial mine-laying operations. Floating anti-aircraft batteries are therefore urgently needed on the roads at Kerch, at the fish-salting works, at Taman and Senaya.

I have submitted the above statement to the 8th Air Corps, pointing out in my request that there are some of the right type of craft, at present unable to proceed, in Kerch Strait: namely light flak battle-ferries. These must be equipped with two 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns with quadruple mounting, one 3.7 cm. anti-aircraft and one 60 cm. searchlight.

Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch has suffered heavy losses in boats damaged during the recent storms, so much so that only two boats are able to put out. As there are no minesweepers available for sweeping moored mines in Kerch Strait, the Flotilla must be immediately reinforced.

Port Commander, Sevastopol has been ordered to transfer 2 boats of the Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol to Kerch as soon as the weather permits.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

26 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Two planes carried out reconnaissance over the southeastern Black Sea. Coast and harbors were reconnoitered as far as Sukhum in moderate visibility. From Ochemchiri to Batum the coast could not be examined owing to the weather. No shipping was observed between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. In those ports examined, shipping was normal. There were several patrol vessels, presumably anti-submarine vessels, between Tuapse and Gudauty, also M.T.B. activity. Off Sukhum there were 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, and 1 minesweeper and 2 patrol vessels coming from the direction of Tuapse on a southeasterly course. Off Poti harbor there was probably 1 destroyer. At 1000, about 30 miles west of Batum, course 200° there was 1 ocean-going tug, nationality unknown. There was 1 freighter off Samsun, probably making for that harbor, and another small freighter north of Bafra Burun on a westerly course.

A night reconnaissance plane equipped with Lichtenstein gear located nothing as far as the southern east coast.

At 1721 Main Naval D/F Station Constantza located 1 submarine north of Bafra Burun, at 1750 the boat was about 75 miles north of Cape Bafra Burun. According to radio traffic a destroyer was in an unidentified position at 2055, presumably in the southeastern Black Sea. No further fleet activity was detected. Seven submarines were intercepted in the Black Sea, 5 in the central to western area, 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0500 Nineteen naval ferry barges and 2 lighters resumed ferry traffic between Kerch-Taman, the fish-salting works and Senaya. The high seas again greatly handicapped work at the landing stages of the fish salting works and Taman.

Shipments of timber by naval ferry barges along the Crimean coast from Yalta to Kerch and Anapa transport operations could not be resumed.

Two naval ferry barges, attempting to proceed from Yalta to Theodosia, had to turn back because of the weather as soon as they had left Yalta.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

As a result of the favorable weather prevailing in the northwestern Black Sea (E winds force 2 - 4), the convoy of tugs consisting of 3 freight towing vessels, 8 tugs, 8 lighters with towed cylinder gear, and escorted by 2 gunboats and 4 FZ boats, sailed for Sevastopol. Tugs and freight towing vessels are intended for ferry traffic in Kerch Strait or for traffic from Sevastopol direct to Kerch or Taman.

Weather forecast:

0930 Wind N to NE; force 6. Forecast for the coming night in sea area south of Kerch Strait, wind NE, force 5 - 4, bright visibility over 10 miles.

1300 Four planes attacked the convoy "Prodromos" escorted by 4 naval ferry barges off Eupatoria and launched two torpedoes against it; no hits were scored. The planes turned away after being attacked by anti-aircraft.

One plane made a second aerial torpedo attack at 1620, but the torpedo missed. The plane was attacked by anti-aircraft and a hit was observed, after which it turned away.

Commander E-boats reported that E-boats S 42, S 45 and S 46 which are to reinforce the 1st E-Boat Flotilla, have been transferred to Linz and are due there between 25 March and 1 April. I am expecting that the boats will be commissioned and join the Flotilla by the middle of June.

Again today the minesweeping plane was only able to sweep Kerch Strait during the forenoon. The route from Kerch to the fish-salting works was twice swept to a breadth of 400 meters. No mines swept. During the afternoon the minesweeping plane was unable to operate because of the weather.

U 20 arrived at Galatz from Linz on 24 March.

E-boat S 102 is ready for operations at Constantza. The Flotilla has been ordered to transfer the boat to Ivan Baba as soon as the weather permits.

There will thus be 5 boats available for future operations.

About 31 March E-boat S 26 will have to be released for engine overhaul at Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL

Enemy Air Activity:

Twenty-five high explosive bombs were dropped on Taman causing considerable material damage. Telephone communications were largely destroyed. There were several enemy raids on Theodosia, Yalta and Sevastopol, the anti-aircraft went into action, no bombs were dropped.

There were lively exchanges of gunfire at Novorossisk. Installations in the eastern harbor and the northern sector of the town were shelled by a rocket firing gun. No casualties.

2200

Naval ferry barges Nos. 135 and 127 were ordered to put out from Theodosia for Kerch with the tug "Kchl" at about 2400, because the weather is expected to improve during the night and both the tug and timber are urgently needed in Kerch.

With reference to my application for floating anti-aircraft batteries to be positioned in Kerch Strait (see War Diary 25 March), the 8th Air Corps reported that 4 light battle ferries had been moved as requested off Kerch, the fish-salting works, Taman and Senaya. It proved impossible to equip them with 3.7 cm. anti-aircraft because they are at present unobtainable, but each ferry has two 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns with quadruple mountings.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Ferry traffic to Taman and the fish-salting works had to be stopped at 1300 because of the increasingly heavy seas. Traffic to Senaya was maintained.

Again today the naval ferry barges were mainly used for supplies from west to east. The goods for Senaya and Taman requested by Quartermaster General, Army Group A were all shipped.

Combined operations craft crossed unimpeded by the weather to Kossa Chuchka and achieved particularly good results.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 3,955 (415) men, 257 (85) prisoners,  
84 (26) civilians, 206 (19) lorries,  
63 (3) personnel motor vehicles,  
14 (1) motor cycles, 4 (3) generators,  
20 field kitchens, 55 (4) miscellaneous  
vehicles, 6 (4) guns, 492 (57) horse-

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

drawn vehicles, 1,896 (158)  
horses, 30 draft animals, 430  
(30) drums of cable, (30) tons of  
cotton and hemp, (17) tons of  
service supplies, 150 cartridges,  
150 empty cases.

West-East: 432 (7) men, 5 lorries, 2 personnel  
motor vehicles, 2 motor cycles,  
2 searchlights, 1 gun, 1 listening  
set, 1,616 (874) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

27 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance was flown over the southeastern Black Sea in good visibility. One passenger ship of 2,500 tons and 1 freighter of 2,500 tons were identified on Trabzon roads.

The east coast and the ports as far as Batum were reconnoitered in changing visibility; Poti was only cursorily examined because of the defenses and the weather. All the heavy units were identified at their bases. Apart from motor minesweepers, small craft, patrol vessels and submarine chasers, no traffic was observed off the entire coast. Shipping in port was very little changed.

At 0750 1 motor minesweeper on a northwesterly course was 10 miles northwest of Tuapse, at 0835 three boats were putting out from Sochi. Off Sochi there was 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast, high speed. There were 3 anti-submarine vessels off Poti, anti-submarine operations probable. Between Poti and Batum there were 2 coastal vessels, each of 300 tons, presumably patrol boats.

Only 3 tankers were identified on Batum roads today, each of 6,000 tons.

Night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea flown for the protection of our convoys located no ships.

Main Naval D/F Station identified no activity of surface ships; there were 2 submarines in the central Black Sea, 3 in the western and 1 in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Kerch

0400 Every available naval ferry barge took part in transport operations in a NE wind, force 4. The heavy seas continued to interfere with loading and unloading, particularly at Taman.

0700 The Crimean towed convoy proceeding from Odessa to Sevastopol is approximately level with Cape Tarkhankutzki.

In view of the relatively small escort (2 gunboats and 4 FZ boats to 11 tugs with ships in tow) and the aerial torpedo attack on the convoy "Prodromos" off Eupatoria yesterday, I have

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

requested the 8th Air Corps for fighter cover or, at least, for more protection from bombers. Since this request could not be met because of lack of forces, I have ordered 3 naval ferry barges to put out from Sevastopol to reinforce the convoy's escort. Ferry barges F 135 and F 168 and the tug "Kehl" carried out their orders to endeavor to proceed from Theodosia to Kerch, but were obliged to return to port owing to the weather.

Weather forecast:

0930 NE winds, force 5, visibility good.

Anapa transport operations were again postponed for 24 hours.

U 19 reported: "Starboard thrust bearing out of order, repair impossible. Request return passage. If reply affirmative, will start 27 March 1600. 1 steamer probably sunk."

The boat has been ordered to return to Constantza via the northern route and after leaving the operational area, to give further details of the steamer presumed sunk.

The following radiogram was then received:

"Fan of three was fired at a range of 3,600 meters at a passenger steamer of 2,000 tons. An explosion followed. The steamer stopped but no further observations were possible because of her defenses."

1344- Four planes launched aerial torpedoes against  
1518 the convoy "Charkov/Succeava" escorted by 2 destroyers and 3 motor minesweepers south of Eupatoria. S 4 torpedoes were fired but no hits scored. A submarine attacked simultaneously. No further details have yet been received.

1500 The Crimean towed convoy put in to Sevastopol. Nothing to report.

In answer to the request, U 24 reported that opportunities for attack in the assigned operational area were observed but could not be exploited. Her stock of torpedoes is still intact.

There is no need to transfer the above operational area.

2000 E-boat S 102 put out from Constantza for Ivan Baba.

CONFIDENTIAL

Enemy Air Activity:

During the day Kossa Chuchka, Taman, the fish-salting works, Yenikale and Kerch were repeatedly bombed.

The Army ammunition dump at Kossa Chuchka was hit and 7 stores of cartridges were burned out.

Otherwise no damage was caused and there were no casualties.

At 1735 at Novorossisk 3 M.T.B.s heading for the landing stage from the direction of Cape Doob were driven off by gunfire. Otherwise nothing to report.

Minesweeping in Kerch Strait was confined to minesweeping planes checking for standard mines between Kerch and the fish-salting works. Engine trouble forced the planes to break off operations after 2 covering sweeps which were without result.

Since the prevailing heavy sea precluded use of gear, there were no operations by groups of minesweepers.

2200

The weather improved in the course of the evening. Orders were issued to 5 naval ferry barges lying ready at Theodosia, 4 of them loaded with timber, and the tug "Kehl", to put out for Kerch at 2400.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,522 (399) men, 163 prisoners, 6 civilians, 394 (10) lorries, 57 (1) personnel motor vehicles, 6 armored cars, 8 armored scout cars, 1 ambulance, 24 (2) motor cycles, 140 (116) horse-drawn vehicles, 501 (478) horses, (13) draft animals, (20) tons of service supplies, 4 (1) guns, 80 empty barrels.

West-East: 1,173 (15) men, 14 lorries, 2 motor cycles, 203 tons of ammunition, 105 tons of railway stock, 54 tons of building material, 360 (171) tons of supplies. (Navy's figures in brackets.)



CONFIDENTIAL

The small contribution of naval ferry barges to the total may be attributed to the fact that a number of ferry barges which at Army Group A's request had concentrated on shipments from west to east could not be unloaded on 26 March. Because loading and unloading takes so long, they could not be made ready at Kerch today for the next crossing. Hence, again today only 18 crossings were made.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

28 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance in good visibility identified 1 small freighter and 1 merchant ship on an easterly course off the Turkish coast. The harbors and coast were surveyed as far as Batum in visibility that was at times poor. No shipping was observed between Ghelenjik and Adler.

Off Cape Adler at 0830 six M.T.B.s were identified on a northwesterly course. 70 miles west of Tuapse there was 1 patrol boat stopped; 30 miles southwest of Adler, course east, 1 anti-submarine vessel; 60 miles west of Poti, 1 submarine submerging.

Shipping at Ghelenjik at 0825 was as follows: 1 merchant ship of 600 tons, 3 coastal vessels and 6 boats; Tuapse at 0815 5 merchant ships totaling 3,000 tons and 6 coastal vessels; Sochi 1 small merchant ship of 1,000 tons and 2 coastal vessels. There has latterly been very little shipping in the ports off the north coast. In Poti at 1200 the battleship, 1 light cruiser in dock, 3 destroyers, 4 merchant ships, each of 4,000 tons were identified. Approximately 6 miles west of Poti there were 2 guardboats and 1 tanker of 6,000 tons, stopped. Batum could not be surveyed because of the weather; there were 3 tankers each of 7,000 tons off the harbor.

An Air Force bomber formation reported 1 boat in the Sea of Azov making for Primorski Aktari.

Night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea had to be broken off because the Lichtenstein gear went out of action. Off the Caucasus coast, south of Tuapse, night reconnaissance planes with Lichtenstein gear in combined operations with E-boats, located 2 ships on a southeasterly course about 5 kilometers off the coast. Despite anti-aircraft fire the reconnaissance plane maintained contact from 2230 until 2318. No shipping was located in the rest of the area.

Despite continuous radio traffic during the day, the radio survey detected no activity of heavy ships. Mine submarines were intercepted at sea, 4 of them probably in the central to western Black Sea and 5 off the east coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

-24-

SECURITY INFORMATION

279

CONFIDENTIAL

Own Situation:

0800 The tug "Forsch" was damaged by a mine 500 meters west of the approach buoy at Sevastopol. The tug was brought in to harbor. The explosion occurred about 15 - 20 meters abeam of the tug, in 20 meters of water. The degaussing equipment was switched on. The tug "Forsch" was towing a cylinder gear with a towing hawser of 30 m. which was being taken to Kerch. The non-contact mine must have exploded as a result of the residual magnetism of the cylinder gear.

The route had been repeatedly checked with towed loop gear without result. Port Commander, Sevastopol has been requested to check the harbor entrance with towed cylinder gear to a breadth of 500 m. as quickly as possible.

Weather forecast:

0930 South Crimean and north Caucasus coast. S to SE winds, force 2 - 3, overcast, visibility 10 miles.

The weather favors E-boat operations. After the long interval it is imperative that all available E-boats and Italian E-boats should operate against supply traffic immediately off the Caucasus coast. According to the Army, the enemy at the Myshako bridgehead is at present suffering from a shortage of rations and ammunition so that he is not in a position to undertake heavy engagements. If the supplies to Myshako or the traffic to Ghelenjik were damaged, sources of supply at the bridgehead would become even more precarious, a situation which would bring great relief to the Army.

Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to operate against enemy supplies between Tuapse and Cape Chugovkopas and 2 between Tuapse and Cape Uchdere during the coming night. They are not to leave the area until 1 hour before daybreak.

At the same time 2 boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla will occupy a lurking position off Myshako and 2 more will be between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas.

Both Flotillas will put out at about 1400 and put in to their bases again at 0900 on 29 March.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

The 8th Air Corps continued to mine Ghelenjik Bay. The fact that there has latterly been very little shipping in the bay would suggest that the enemy is scarcely using Ghelenjik as a supply harbor for the Novorossisk front because of mines. The same conclusion can also be drawn from air reconnaissance which detected loading off the coast south of Ghelenjik, in air grid square 8551. This observation was pointed out to Italian E-boat Flotilla in today's orders.

1200 Two naval ferry barges put out from Theodosia and 1 from Kerch for the 9th Anapa transport operation. The barges will anchor off Cape Takil before dusk and proceed to Anapa at daybreak on 29 March.

In order to avoid attack by M.T.B.s, naval ferry barges used for the Anapa traffic have received strict orders to anchor north of Cape Takil. They have been instructed always to leave Kerch or Taman in time to reach their anchorage before dusk so that the batteries, and coastal patrols can gain a clear picture of the situation before nightfall.

1230 The tug "Amsel" and a lighter, escorted by 2 naval ferry barges, were attacked off Cape Sarich by 4 planes which launched 4 aerial torpedoes against them; no hits were scored. Any results scored by the defense were not reported.

Today the "Murgescu" laid 144 UMB mines in the deep angle-patterned minefield (S 53) north of Sulina.

1615 Italian E-boats put in to Theodosia again on account of the weather.

There was brisk air, artillery and searchlight activity at Novorossisk. Bombs were dropped and the entire harbor area came under gunfire. Bombs hit the living quarters of Port Commander 16. Only buildings were damaged.

Shipping to the bridgehead was observed from the land. Details could not be made out on account of the smoke screen.

The boats about to join the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, namely motor minesweepers R 196, R 197, R 208 and R 209, were today commissioned at the Korneuburg dock, Vienna, with a color parade.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

All the ferry barges and lighters at readiness took part in ferry traffic at 0400 in good weather and unimpeded by ice. Thus the day's transportation figures rose considerably:

East-West: 3,414 (837) men, 191 prisoners, 72 (70) civilians, 39 (18) wounded, 283 (37) lorries, 95 (6) personnel motor vehicles, 2,109 (658) horses, 575 (226) other vehicles, 2 generators, (50) tons of Army supplies, 29 guns, 46 (2) motor cycles, (70) tons of bombs, 300 sacks (3) of cotton, 27 draft animals, (1) ton of mail.

West-East: 1,230 (8) men, 456 (210) tons of ammunition, 4 lorries, 24 tractors, (21) tons of mail, 2,055 (1,590) tons of supplies.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

Five naval ferry barges, 4 of them loaded with timber for pioneer installations in Kerch Strait, today put in to Kerch from Theodosia. Two more ferry barges loaded with timber today proceeded from Yalta to Theodosia and will proceed from there to Kerch tomorrow.

Minesweeping Operations:

Last night searchlight personnel at Kossa Tuzla observed a plane drop 5 mines outside the swept channel. The FZ-group using 2 sets of gear and the minesweeping plane swept the route from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman. No mines swept.

On 22 March, while searching for the wreck of the lighter which exploded when struck by a bomb, only small fragments of metal were found within a radius of 500 meters from the site of the explosion. Obstruction to shipping from wreckage is therefore unlikely.

CONFIDENTIAL

29 March, 1943

Peropol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance examined the coast and harbors as far as and including Poti. Batum could not be surveyed because of the weather. Off the entire Caucasus coast there was lively shipping traffic in both directions.

In the early hours of the morning south of Ghelenjik there were 6 M.T.B.s, course northwest, 1 small freighter and 2 patrol vessels course southeast. At 0724, 10 miles northwest of Tuapse, there were 3 coastal vessels and 1 motor minesweeper with 4 boats in tow on a southeasterly course. Putting in to Tuapse from the north were 3 coastal vessels, from the south one convoy with a tanker of 7,000 tons and heavy escort including 1 destroyer. Another convoy making for the southeast was identified at 0925 8 miles south of Tuapse. At 0816 a merchant ship of about 2,000 tons, heading north, was identified 5 miles north of Poti.

Shipping at Tuapse at 0918 was as follows: 2 minesweepers, 3 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s and 1 tanker of 7,000 tons. Shipping in the other ports was little changed. The heavy units were identified at their bases.

No enemy shipping was located by night reconnaissance in the central Black Sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer west of Tuapse / Cape Adler at 0920. At 1045 the same destroyer was off Tuapse, probably putting in to port. More confirmation of her presence comes from the Air Force, who also intercepted her. Apart from 4 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast no other enemy warships were detected in the radio survey.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0930 South of Kerch Strait wind SE to E, 3 - 4, bright to cloudy, visibility 6 - 10 miles.

According to the weather forecast Italian E-boat operations should be possible. Italian E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to use 4 boats on the night of 29 March and resume

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

the operations which were interrupted by the weather, against supplies to the Novorossisk bridgehead.

At 1530 four Italian E-boats put out for operations according to plan.

1000 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in from the night's operations. From 2030 to 0300 two boats stood northwest of Tuapse off Cape Olginskaya. Neither shipping nor patrol activity was observed.

From 2100 to 0300 the other 2 boats operated in the Tuapse/Sochi area against a steamer reported by the Air Force. They failed to gain contact with the steamer because engine trouble forced the reconnaissance plane to stop shadowing before the E-boats could arrive. No patrols, apart from a gunboat, were encountered. There was lively searchlight activity on the coast between Tuapse and the mouth of the Shache. Furthermore, from the coast the enemy fired brilliant white flares out to sea, making it more and more difficult for the E-boats to operate unobserved off the coast.

At approximately 0730 air reconnaissance sighted 1 tanker of 6 - 7,000 tons escorted by 1 destroyer and 6 patrol vessels putting in to Tuapse. The convoy did not pass through the operational area assigned to the southern group of 2 E-boats until after daybreak, by which time they were already on their return passage.

This is fresh evidence for my repeated assertion that the enemy organizes his supply traffic off the Caucasus coast so as to pass the area threatened by E-boats after daybreak, that is at a time when there is no fear of E-boat attacks against well escorted supply ships.

Enemy Air Activity:

From 1800 onwards Kerch, Taman, Kossa Chuchka and Ilich were repeatedly bombed. At Taman telephone communications sustained a direct hit, otherwise no damage reported. Anti-aircraft fire shot down one plane over Taman and one off Ilich.

Three Russian parachutists who had been ordered to blow up the landing bridge at Senaya, were taken prisoner near Senaya.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

At about 1100, after a low-level attack on the fish-salting works, the bombers made off and machine-gunned the FZ-group operating on the route to Kerch. No casualties. The FZ boats opened fire with their anti-aircraft but without result.

At Novorossisk the situation at the bridgehead is unchanged. At approximately 0500 five M.T.B.s were sighted from the landing stage heading out to sea.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Ferry operations which, in the case of naval ferry barges, were still primarily concentrated on traffic from west to east, proceeded in favorable weather without being handicapped by high seas, ice or enemy action.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 3,679 (640) men, 18 wounded, 124 prisoners, 149 (84) civilians, 356 (31) lorries, 96 (3) personnel motor vehicles, 1,045 (570) horses, 280 (204) horse-drawn vehicles, 67 other vehicles, 9 guns, 64 (2) motor cycles, 200 (52) tons of service supplies, 100 oxygen containers.

West-East: 510 (18) men, 6 (1) lorries, 3 personnel motor vehicles, (101) tons of ammunition, (169) tons of fuel, 315 (377) tons of service supplies, 303 (169) tons of bulk fodder, 624 (360) tons of grain, (52) tons of preserved fodder, (225) tons of rations, 1 motor cycle. (Navy's figures in brackets.)

Three naval ferry barges carried out the ninth Anapa transport operation according to plan. On their return passage the ferry barges sighted a submerged submarine with her periscope up in the southern exit of Kerch Strait; they gave chase but could not catch up because of her superior speed.

Three naval ferry barges left Kerch at 1415 for the tenth Anapa transport operation, with 50 tons of ammunition, 33 tons of fuel, 60 tons of bombs, 30 tons of mail and 20 TMB mines for the mining of Novorossisk harbor.

Minesweeping operations in Kerch Strait:

The supply routes from Kerch to the fish-salting works to Taman were swept by the FZ-group and minesweeping planes.



CONFIDENTIAL

30 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance was flown and some photographs taken in good visibility of the Caucasus coast and harbors, including Batum, and the southeastern Black Sea. Shipping in port was normal. The heavy units, 1 light cruiser and 6 destroyers, were in their bases. There was no activity in the southeastern Black Sea or in the Ghelenjik/Tuapse area. Shipping traffic in the coastal area was slight during the day. During the forenoon the 7,000 ton tanker reported yesterday in Tuapse put out on a southeasterly course with 4 patrol vessels. One submarine was sighted southwest of Adler.

According to air photographs there were 3 patrol vessels off Ghelonjik, 3 motor minesweepers in Kabardinka Bay and one leaving that area, at 0915 south of Tuapse 1 small freighter with patrol vessel on a southeasterly course, and 1 tanker of 2,500 tons stopped, immediately off the coast; at 1010 50 miles west of Poti probably 1 destroyer, on an easterly course.

No shipping was located by night reconnaissance protecting the German convoys in the central and southeastern Black Sea. A reconnaissance plane with Lichtenstein gear working with E-boats, located a convoy at 0000 on 31 March on a northwesterly course near Cagri and shadowed it until 0100.

The destroyer which put in to Tuapse yesterday at 1045, left again and was intercepted by Main Naval D/F Station at midnight off Batum. From further radio intercept reports it seems probable that the cruiser A is at sea. No exact data, could however, be obtained from the radio survey. Five submarines were also identified off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0813

An air reconnaissance plane reported 1 tanker of 7,000 tons with 4 guardboats, course south-east, medium speed (11 to 17 knots) in grid square 9419. According to dead reckoning the tanker should enter U 24's operational area in about three hours. I have requested the 8th Air Corps to shadow her and keep U 24 continually informed.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECRET INFORMATION

-101-

286

CONFIDENTIAL

0900 Two Italian E-boats put in to Theodosia again from night operations. The boats were immediately off the coast near Myshako and Cape Doob until about 0130. Except for 1 fishing vessel near Cape Doob no shipping and no patrols were encountered. The boats were machine-gunned from the land. There were no losses. The second group of 2 boats had to break off operations shortly before reaching the operational area because one of them damaged her screw.

Weather forecast:

0930 South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts; SE winds, force 5, winds from the sea at midday, force 3 - 4, cloudy to overcast, visibility 5 - 8 miles.

Five boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla have been ordered to operate against enemy supplies off the Caucasus coast on the night of 30/31 March, 2 of them between Tuapse and Chugovkopas, and 3 between Tuapse and Uchdere.

Also on the night of 30/31 March 2 boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla have been ordered to lie in wait between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas. The Flotillas have orders to remain in the operational area until 1 hour before daybreak.

1215 Sevastopol harbor was heavily raided by 18 planes which dropped about 20 bombs. The planes flew in from Balaklava across the mountains so that the anti-aircraft defenses were taken by surprise and started firing too late. The accommodation ship "Ev Lokie" belonging to the 1st Landing Craft Flotilla suffered a near miss which made her spring a leak and sink at the pier on an even keel. A preliminary investigation suggests that it will be possible to salvage her.

The escort ship "Romania" was slightly damaged by bomb splinters.

The living quarters of Naval Shore Commander's Office received a direct hit. The building was completely destroyed.

Losses: 5 Germans killed, 22 wounded, including Lieut. Willach (j.g.) who has serious injuries.

Rumanian losses: 40 killed and 70 wounded. In addition 9 auxiliary volunteers were killed.

1400 U 19 put in to Constantza.

CONFIDENTIAL

1500 The operational orders for the Italian E-boats were canceled because of the weather.

The 1st E-Boat Flotilla put out according to plan.

Minesweeping in Kerch Strait:

The new shorter route from Kerch to Yenikale was swept by the Harbor Defense Flotilla Kerch and by a minesweeping plane. No mines swept. The FZ-group checked the route from Pavlovski to Kamish Burun. No mines swept.

Two mines outside the swept channels exploded today north and south of Kossa Tuzla without apparent cause.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The following transportation figures were achieved today by 27 naval ferry barges and 2 lighters in good weather and under good road conditions which favored bringing of supplies to and from the landing stages:

East-West: 3,841 (1,424) men, 565 prisoners, 271 (34) civilians, 43 motor cycles, 78 personnel motor vehicles, 247 (32) lorries, 719 (303) horse-drawn vehicles, 80 (22) miscellaneous vehicles, (93) tons of service supplies, (1) motor generator, 12 (5) draft animals, 2,427 (1,038) horses, 1,000 empty cans, 19 (12) guns, (68) cans of oil, (7) cans of fuel oil, 25 drums of cable.

West-East: 569 (21) men, 2 motor cycles, 2 personnel motor vehicles, 5 lorries, 2 tons of carbide, 24 tons of gas in cylinders, 388 (135) tons of ammunition, (232) tons of fuel, (20) tons of mail, 355 (70) tons of bulk fodder, (341) tons of grain, (164) tons of rations, 38 tons of building material, 225 tons of railway building material, (210) tons of oil, (1) searchlight, (1) motor generator.  
(Navy's figures in brackets.)

The ice in the northern exit of Kerch Strait was examined from a plane and it looked as if the route to Temriuk might be fit for use in 5 - 6 days. There are still fields of drift ice disintegrating there.

CONFIDENTIAL

The tenth Anapa transport operation proceeded according to plan. After the operation the naval ferry barges anchored at about 1800 near Cape Takil.

At 1400 three more naval ferry barges put out from Kerch for the eleventh Anapa transport operation, with a load of 55 tons of ammunition, 71 tons of fuel, 45 tons of barley, 75 tons of bombs, 3 tons of mail.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus today undertook a combined landing operation with Army HQ 17 northeast of Temriuk against enemy forces which had advanced over the marshy ground towards Temriuk. The plan was to come upon them from behind and eliminate them.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was in charge of the operation up to the time of the landing.

Two armed tugs, 5 motor fishing vessels and a large number of combined operations craft were used. 250 men landed under cover of gunfire provided by the landing flotilla.

By about 1200 the Combined Operations Battalion had completed their task. One boat of the landing flotilla was sunk by machine-gunfire, presumably from one of our own fighters, and Lieutenant Oberheids (j.g.), in charge of the landing flotilla, was seriously wounded. The remaining boats returned to Temriuk without loss.

I received the following teletype from Group South:

"Repeated attacks by Russian light naval forces against our coasts and seaborne supplies, the penetration of Russian M.T.B.s into Kerch Strait, the renewed assembly of Russian light naval forces in Ghelenjik Bay, call for attention to the following points:

1. The coast east and west of Kerch is in our hands. The approach route of E-boats and Italian E-boats from the Theodosia-Ivan Baba area is so long that they cannot possibly effectively intercept and engage Russian forces either actually operating or returning, and also carry out their own offensive operation.
2. In the present situation it is possible that Novorossisk may shortly be used as a base for nuisance raids by Russian forces.
3. Every effort must be made to give our surface

forces the shortest route to enable them to make a flank attack on the enemy vessels on their nuisance raids.

4. Anapa is the only suitable base. Taking weather conditions into consideration, boats must be able to lie in wait there if the situation and reconnaissance suggests the possibility of enemy operations.
5. Although the weather and the enemy situation will probably only permit temporary use of Anapa, berths must nevertheless be improvised by anchoring a barge, a lighter or possibly disabled naval ferry barges, even a wooden raft, which could be used by the boats for short spells. Anti-aircraft defenses placed inland in the vicinity would protect the anchorage from surprise attacks mainly from the sea.
6. Admiral, Black Sea will fit these measures in with his own plans and report action taken."

I replied as follows:

"A. The Navy's primary tasks in the Black Sea are:

1. Defense of German supply traffic.
2. Interference with enemy supply traffic.
3. Defense against enemy landings on the coasts we occupy.

Task No. 3 can be effected with the maximum safety and the minimum sacrifice if at the outset the enemy is deprived of the necessary resources for an effective landing operation, namely:

- a. shipping
- b. the heavy warships necessary for the support of major landing operations.

Eliminating the shipping would also dispose of the tasks under 2, and eliminating the heavy ships would simplify Task No. 1.

Hence the few available naval forces have so far been exclusively employed against enemy merchant tonnage and warships from the torpedo-boat upwards. This policy has been rigidly adhered to ever since the arrival of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla and of Italian E-boats in the Black Sea, with the

CONFIDENTIAL

result that since May 1942 a total of 70,000 tons of enemy merchant shipping has been sunk without our suffering any losses. Total enemy tonnage today amounts to approximately 100,000 tons of merchant tonnage and 30,000 tons of tanker space, the merchant tonnage including some 50 coastal vessels and lighters totaling 20,000 tons. Tonnage sunk so far therefore equals about half the enemy's available shipping space at present. Since he is unable to replace his losses in the Black Sea by new constructions and since there are no signs that he is receiving tonnage from outside, if our E-boats and U-boats continue their successful operations against merchant shipping, they are bound to make it impossible for the enemy to carry out effective landing operations which have to be constantly supplied from the sea. The Navy would thus have solved one of its main tasks, if not the task in the Black Sea, while at the same time also severely hitting enemy supply traffic off the Caucasus coast.

For the above reasons E-boats have so far been ordered to avoid encounters with enemy patrol forces (M.T.B.s, anti-submarine vessels, minesweepers and gunboats) unless it was the only way of getting at a valuable target. This practice has been adopted in order to cut losses, since in view of the small number of E-boats available (on an average only 4 E-boats have been operational at one time) each loss means a serious reduction in forces.

It should also be remembered that, according to available data obtained from air photographs of enemy bases and prisoners' reports, the enemy possesses about 40 M.T.B.s and 60 anti-submarine vessels, as well as minesweepers and motor minesweepers. Many of these forces are faster than our E-boats, have superior armament and, being constructed of metal, are less vulnerable than our wooden boats. In an engagement against these forces our E-boats would have to use every weapon at their disposal and even then their prospects of success, armed as they are with 2 cm. guns and built of wood, would be very slight. In view of the large number of vessels at the enemy's disposal an occasional success would scarcely alter our relative strength. As long as we have so few E-boats, every loss is bound to be a grave one, making the risk out of all proportion to the result obtained.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

I would request you to investigate the above points and to sanction the continued use of E-boats and Italian E-boats against large enemy warships and supply traffic. Apart from destroying enemy tonnage, it brings considerable relief to the Army, particularly in the struggle for Novorossisk.

- F. The use of Anapa as a jumping-off base for E-boats has already been thoroughly investigated here and the conclusions were as follows:
1. Anapa is more open to enemy air attacks than Ivan Baba and Theodosia. The port has recently been raided almost daily, sometimes by very heavy formations.
  2. From time to time it has been shelled from the sea by medium guns (presumably minesweepers, large anti-submarine vessels and perhaps also torpedoboats).
  3. Air raids and bombardments from the sea would be intensified as soon as the enemy identified E-boats in harbor. Because the harbor is such a small one it would be impossible to camouflage the boats.
  4. The shorter approach route to the operational area from Anapa would not enable E-boats to remain there for a longer period when operating against shipping off the Caucasus coast. As their assigned area can be observed from the coast they must not arrive there before dark, and must leave it again before daybreak. Daylight attacks on traffic proceeding immediately off the coast are out of the question because of the superior armament of enemy convoys and coastal defenses.
  5. E-boat successes can only be achieved by using the surprise element, and if they are transferred to Anapa the enemy's continual air reconnaissance is bound to observe them and give a warning that operations are imminent.
  6. As a jumping-off base for offensive operations Anapa has the advantage of having prevailing easterly winds, so that the E-boats can put out and reach their operational area even in bad weather by keeping in the lee of the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

In order to exploit the advantage described in para. 6 it is proposed to make Anapa a jumping-off base for E-boats. Adequate anti-aircraft defenses are essential and in view of the fact that the naval ferry barges used in Anapa transport operations also need protection, I am sending in a relevant request to 8th Air Corps.

Admiral, Black Sea Gkdos. 1855 A.I."

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

-108-

293



CONFIDENTIAL

31 March, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance surveyed the Caucasus coast and harbors including Batum. All the heavy units were identified in their bases. There were 2 motor minesweepers and 13 M.T.B.s in Ghelenjik. At 0840 shipping in Sukhum included 3 M.T.B.s, 12 boats and 2 merchant ships totaling 1,300 tons.

At 0420 three M.T.B.s were sighted 15 miles northwest of Tuapse, high speed, course 130°. At 0840 a reconnaissance plane reported a convoy consisting of 1 tanker of 7,000 tons and 2 minesweepers, course northwest, 5 miles south of Sukhum. A reconnaissance plane shadowed it until 0930. At 0935, 20 miles west of Sukhum, a tanker was again sighted but without escort, on a northwesterly course. Obviously it must have been the same tanker.

No enemy ships were located by night reconnaissance.

No heavy units were identified in the radio survey. Three submarines were intercepted off the east coast in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

0930 Northeastern Black Sea: Winds S, force 3, freshening at noon to 4 - 5, cloudy, visibility over 10 miles.

Two boats of the Italian E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to operate on the night of 31 March/1 April against enemy supply traffic off Myshako and two others between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas. The boats were to put out at 1500, be in the assigned area towards 2000, and return to Theodosia 1 hour before dawn.

No orders have been issued to the 1st E-Boat Flotilla which has been at sea since 1500 on 30 March and puts in again today at about 1100.

1103 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba from night operations. One group of 2 boats lay in wait near Cape Chugovkopas from 2000, and the second group lay in wait southeast of Tuapse in grid square CL 9322, lower right-hand corner.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

From 2300 the second group operated against the enemy convoy intercepted by a night reconnaissance plane with a Lichtenstein gear and reported to be in air grid square 4057. During the approach up to the enemy, radio communication between E-boat and reconnaissance plane on the tactical shadowing wave was good; reception of the homing D/F signals was also good. When the E-boats were still about 20 miles from the convoy, engine trouble obliged the plane to stop shadowing. The E-boats continued their passage off the coast towards the convoy but failed to gain contact. They passed a gunboat near Sochi, but encountered no patrol or other shipping. The first group of 2 E-boats was in grid square CL 6666 until 0300 but, apart from 1 patrol vessel, they did not encounter any shipping either.

As a result of the above experience in which the E-boats were robbed of good prospects of success simply because engine trouble forced the reconnaissance plane to break off shadowing operations, I have requested the 8th Air Corps to hold a relief plane with Lichtenstein gear in readiness on the nights when E-boats are operating off the Caucasus coast.

1230

The convoy "Dresden" consisting of motor minesweepers R 163, R 164 and R 165, proceeding from Constantza to Sevastopol, was attacked by aerial torpedoes off Eupatoria. Two type SB 3 planes attacked twice, each time with 2 torpedoes. In the first attack the torpedoes were dropped from an altitude of 80 to 100 meters, in the second, from 20 to 30 meters. Firing range was 800 meters and 1,200 and 200 meters respectively. No hits were scored. Two of the torpedoes were surface runners. The second attacking plane was badly hit by our own anti-aircraft and crashed in flames.

1545

Four Italian E-boats put out on operations according to plan. They put in again at 1800 because of the increasingly bad weather and high seas.

Observations from the land would suggest that the enemy sends supply traffic to the landing stage at Mysako from time to time. In view of present weather conditions which frequently hold up E-boat operations for several days at a time, it would be advisable to seal off the landing stage by laying minefields as planned on 11 February. Due to enemy interference the 1st E-Boat Flotilla could not lay

CONFIDENTIAL

the minefield ordered at the proper site on their operation on 28 February. As a result the landing stages at Myshako can be approached from the south without danger.

Four boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to lay the minefield on the night of 1/2 April, using 24 UMB mines, and to make the necessary preparations immediately.

Russian planes have recently been conducting much heavier bomber and torpedo attacks against our convoys and naval ferry barges transporting supplies off the Crimean coast. Until now enemy planes were often forced to launch their torpedoes prematurely. However, we must expect that experience and tactical training, in which British influence will play a decisive role, will make aerial torpedo attacks an ever-increasing menace. It is imperative that naval ferry barges be better armed with anti-aircraft weapons and that crews receive more adequate training. Up to now all newly constructed boats have been rushed out immediately they were ready on the score that they were needed for urgent tasks and the crews' training has suffered in consequence. I have therefore requested that naval ferry barges be armed with 2 cm. quadruple mounting anti-aircraft guns and have directed that they undergo at least two weeks' training before going on actual operations.

2100 E-boat S 26 put out from Ivan Baba for Constantza for engine overhaul. Once again only 4 boats of the 1st E-Boat Flotilla are fully operational.

U 19 submitted the following report after putting in from her second operation (17 - 27 March): Operational area reached 1600 on 20 March. Lively air activity off the coast. At 1303 on 23 March attacked a 2,500 ton steamer with a fan of three in Gagri Bay. Heard a torpedo explosion at a range of 3,600 meters. Three motor minesweepers countered our attack. At last observation saw that the steamer was stopped and down by the stern. The defenses made further observation impossible. No traffic was observed between 24 and 27 March, on the other hand the operational area was more heavily patrolled. Was forced to return on 27 March because of engine trouble.

Minesweeping in Kerch Strait:

A minesweeping plane made 12 covering runs 400 meters in breadth, in a check for standard mines on the route from Kerch to Yenikale. No mines swept.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

The FZ-group searched the same route with 2 sets of gear, making 4 covering runs and using double breadth of sweep. No mines swept.

Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch identified a moored mine dropped from a plane off the southern tip of Kossa Tuzla; 150 miles from the land, in 1.5 meters of water. Mining and Barrage Command, Kerch will salvage it.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Taman, Senaya and the fish-salting works were bombed and machine-gunned during the day. The landing stages and boats were not damaged.

Transportation figures for the day were:

East-West: 2,588 (360) men, 974 (429) Allies, 705 leave personnel, 48 (11) wounded, 50 (17) Turkish troops, 367 (196) prisoners, 161 (37) civilians, 53 (8) motor cycles, 63 (8) personnel motor vehicles, 468 (90) lorries, 99 (8) other vehicles, 413 (126) horse-drawn vehicles, 1,745 (290) horses, (3) tons of mail, 80 tons of engineering equipment, 7 anti-tank guns, 8 (11) guns, (16) tons of hemp, 45 tons of clothing.

West-East: 333 (56) men, 25 (4) Allies, 6 (1) vehicles, 20 tugs, 1,432 tons of service supplies, 205 tons of ammunition, 9 tons of mail. (Total shipment of supplies by Naval Special Transport Staff only; full total not yet received.)

The eleventh Anapa transport operation proceeded according to plan. Naval ferry barges put in to Anapa at 0750, left again at 1400 and dropped anchor near Cape Takil at about 1800.

At 1530 three naval ferry barges left Kerch for the twelfth Anapa transport operation with a load of 45.3 tons of Air Force gasoline, 29 tons of oil for aircraft engines, 15 cases of hand grenades, 10 tons of mail, 55 tons of preserved fodder, 36 tons of rations, 85 tons of anti-aircraft ammunition.

Kieseritzky.

CONFIDENTIAL

Survey for March, 1943

- A. Enemy naval forces sunk: None.
- B. Enemy merchant ships sunk:
- a. E-boats: 1 lighter 500 tons,  
1 tanker 7,000 tons, burnt out.
  - b. U-boats: 1 freighter 2,500 tons, torpedoed,  
1 tanker 8,200 tons, torpedoed,  
probably sunk.
- C. Planes shot down:
- 1 DB 3 while attacking convoy.
- D. Total transportation figures:
- I. Kerch Strait:
- 1. Totals:
    - a. East-West:  
78,542 men,  
9,861 prisoners,  
8,115 civilians,  
48,684 horses,  
12,356 horse-drawn vehicles,  
8,447 transport vehicles,  
2,716 tons of service supplies.
    - b. West-East:  
18,081 tons of supplies,  
1,688 tons of building materials.
  - 2. Navy's contribution: (Naval ferry barges,  
occasional lighters.)
    - a. East-West:  
22,026 men,  
1,655 prisoners,  
1,551 civilians,  
19,885 horses,  
5,534 horse-drawn vehicles,  
930 transport vehicles,  
1,650 tons service supplies.
    - b. West-East:  
12,768 tons of supplies,  
1,572 tons of building materials.

II. Kerch-Anapa: 2,353 tons (naval ferry barges).

III. Timber shipments for Army constructions in Kerch Strait, from Yalta to Theodosia by naval ferry barge: 1,445 tons.

IV. From Bulgarian and Rumanian ports to the Crimea: 38,873 tons.

Return load: 3,516 tons.

During March naval forces sighted 102 vessels totaling 89,517 tons.

CONFIDENTIAL

Comments by Naval Group South on the War Diary  
of Admiral Black Sea, 16 - 31 March 1943

1. Re p. /18 March 0800:

At present Russian coastal traffic is resumed after daybreak, that is after our forces have left their attack areas. This re-emphasizes a request which has been repeatedly submitted, either that bombers be sent out after daybreak against the Russian convoys or that the Air Force provide the necessary fighter cover for E-boat and Italian E-boat flotillas and thus enable them to undertake daylight operations as well.

2. Re p. /para.

The results of anti-submarine operations by the Air Force have not been reported.

3. Re p. /23 March:

That Russian M.T.B.s are more seaworthy is hard to believe, because they are smaller than the German boats and just as liable to capsize in heavy seas.

With reference to anchoring off the coast, Admiral Black Sea has already been directed to hold the ships at immediate operational readiness or to let them stand off and on during the waiting period.

4. Re 30 March, last para.:

In addition to the shipping noted there are another 15,000 tons employed for war purposes (e.g. ice-breakers).

Signed on behalf of Naval Group South

Chief of Staff

Brinkmann.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SECURITY INFORMATION







**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**