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UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY
OF
ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA



1 APRIL, 1943 - 30 APRIL, 1943
PG NUMBERS 31529 - 31530

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Editorial Note:

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

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

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1 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Despite good visibility, air reconnaissance sighted no enemy traffic in the southeastern Black Sea. The Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Batum were examined and some of them photographed. Only slight traffic of coastal and patrol vessels and small craft off the northern part of the east coast. No shipping traffic discovered between Sukhum and Batum.

The following vessels were detected: at 0735 2 small coastal vessels and 1 guardboat putting out from Ghelenjik; in the harbor 2 merchant vessels totaling 1,800 G.R.T., 6 coastal vessels and about 40 boats; at 0750 1 small convoy consisting of 1 minesweeper, 1 tug and 2 lighters, course southeast off Tuapse; at 0815 1 M.T.B., course northeast, in Kabardinka Bay. Ochomchiri at 0835: merchant shipping totaling about 3,000 G.R.T., 3 coastal vessels, 3 submarines and several boats. Batum at 1244: 2 heavy cruisers, 3 destroyers, 10 merchant ships totaling 26,000 G.R.T.; in the roads 3 tankers, each 7,000 G.R.T. Poti at 0901; 8 freighters totaling about 32,500 G.R.T., 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light cruiser in dock and 3 destroyers.

At 0440 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 torpedoboat and 3 M.T.B.s in the bay off the landing point putting out to sea and at 1410 another Russian M.T.B. coming from the south was seen making for Kabardinka.

At 2120 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 destroyer and 2 patrol vessels proceeding northwest approximately in the area off Gudauty and Adler. Submarines detected: 2 in the central to western Black Sea, 1 off the east coast and 2 in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

At 0000 U 24 reported tanker "Sowjetskaja" torpedoed and on fire in Gagri Bay. According to a later report, the tanker was torpedoed in air grid square 0457 at 1230 on 31 March. According to Gröner, "Sowjetskaja" has a displacement of 8,288 G.R.T. On account of strong anti-submarine measures, U 24 moved out of her operational area, for the present to the east.

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Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

North Caucasus coast: Variable winds, mainly S, force 4 - 5, cloudy, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

1200 Anapa reported SE winds, force 5, sea 3. Simferopol meteorological station reported winds probably strengthening up to force 6 in the course of the evening. 1st E-Boat Flotilla will have to postpone the minelaying operation for the present for 24 hours.

1400 Three naval ferry barges put in to Anapa again after unloading supplies (Anapa convoy No. 12). They were carrying 5 men, 6 trucks, 2 horse-drawn vehicles, 43 tons of service supplies, 22 tons of naphtha and 4 tons of empty barrels.

1500 Anapa convoy No. 13 put out from Kerch with 3 naval ferry barges carrying 82 tons of preserved fodder, 49 tons of food supplies, 55 tons of Army ammunition, 8 tons of bombs, 10 tons of anti-aircraft ammunition, 116 barrels of gasoline and 1 ton of field mail. At 1800 the naval ferry barges had to put in to Kamish Burun on account of a deterioration in the weather. Naval ferry barge F 540 got stuck in the Pavlovski channel while putting in. Tugs have been sent to get her off.

The convoy comprising "Rheinkontor" and "Adelheid" (each towing 1 lighter), which was escorted by 2 naval ferry barges, was attacked at 0923 off Sudak and between 1245 and 1307 off Cape Meganom, each time by 2 planes. Altogether 19 bombs were dropped. Tug "Rheinkontor" was slightly damaged by bomb splinters. Otherwise no casualties. Our anti-aircraft defenses did not achieve any success.

The "Lola" and "Varna" convoy with 3 destroyers and 2 motor minesweepers had to turn back on passage from Constantza to Sevastopol on account of an unexpected deterioration in the weather. They put in to Constantza. The 2 escorting motor minesweepers, which are urgently needed for duty in Crimean waters, are continuing passage to Sevastopol.

The "Tisza" convoy with 2 gunboats also put in again to the outer harbor at Sulina on account of bad weather.

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1900 Today's air reconnaissance, which was expressly ordered to look for tanker "Sowjetskaja" torpedoed by U 24, did not see anything of her in Gagri Bay. Nor was she detected in Batum or Tuapse. The coast between Sukhum and Batum could not be examined closely because of fighter defenses. As far as the plane could observe, the tanker was not there. 1st Air Corps has been requested to continue the search on 2 April.

Enemy Air Activity:

There were only reconnaissance flights and a few desultory bombing attacks on Temriuk.

From Novorossisk it was reported that the situation in the southern infantry sector was unchanged.

At 0440 several boats left the landing area, course south.

At 1400 a Russian M.T.B. coming from the south put in to Kabardinka Bay. On coming under fire from anti-aircraft batteries, she hid herself in a smoke screen.

Minesweeping Activity:

The FZ-group could not go out on account of rough seas in Kerch Strait.

A moored mine was washed up near Kossa Tuszla and salvaged. It is a Russian aerial mine, type "II" fitted with a clockwork mechanism which destroys the mine within a period of 6 - 10 days by setting off the main charge. The clockwork was fully wound, but not switched on. The discovery of this mine explains the mysterious mine explosions observed during the last few days.

On 31 March, Naval Harbor Master, Taganrog reported machine-gun bombardment of the coast by single Russian motorboats which came close to the ice-limit.

This is the first appearance of enemy boats since the ice receded from this area. Probably there will be more actions of this kind, although for the present it is unlikely that the enemy already has heavily armed craft in the Sea of Azov.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The troops awaiting evacuation at the fish-salting factory and in Senaya were all taken off

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today. There will be no more troops ready for the next few days. Convoy traffic will be maintained, although only on a small scale, on the Kossa Chushka - Yenikale route. For the naval ferry barges, traffic in Kerch Strait will thus be purely a matter of transferring supplies in a west-east direction.

Transportation figures (Navy's share in brackets):

East-West: 4,872 (1,096) men, 49 prisoners, 63 (32) civilians, 79 (3) trucks, 362 (12) personnel vehicles, 32 (2) motor cycles, 30 (1) other vehicles, 361 (334) horse-drawn vehicles, 2,317 (1,217) horses, 46 (6) draft animals, 15 (6) tons of service supplies, 37 (12) guns, 5 tanks and trucks, 50 rubber boats, 20 field kitchens and 5 boats.

West-East: 1,224 (102) men, 3 (1) trucks, 3 personnel vehicles, (1) motor cycle, 39 (27) horse-drawn vehicles, 120 (72) horses, 274 tons of ammunition, 495 (112) tons of fodder, (3) tons of field mail, 160.2 tons of fuel, 1,032 (492) tons of food, (2) guns, 263 (1) tons (miscellaneous).

Naval ferry barges made 54 east-west crossings, while naval ferry barges and 2 lighters made 57 west-east crossings.

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2 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The coast and harbors as far as Ochemchiri were examined, visibility poor in parts. The Chobi estuary and Poti could only be partially examined owing to fighter defenses. Batum not examined. At Poti for the first time we encountered fighter defense by 5 Spitfires with British markings. No enemy ships off the Crimean and Caucasus coasts as far as Ghelenjik. Usual shipping in the harbors as far as could be observed. The reconnaissance plane again sighted 1 tanker (7,000 G.R.T.) in Tuapse at 0815; at 0722 one convoy comprising 3 ships, totaling 1,500 G.R.T., course southeast, 15 miles southeast of Ghelenjik; 1 tug and 1 coastal vessel, approximately 500 G.R.T. in the Sukhum area; at 0830 1 patrol vessel, course south, about 10 miles southwest of Ochemchiri. At 0245 night reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast located 1 ship 15 miles southwest of Adler, course northwest. Night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea was without result.

D/F Station, Constantza reported more activity of small vessels than on previous days (not confirmed by air reconnaissance). One submarine was detected off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts:
SW winds, force 6 - 7, overcast, showers,
visibility 6 - 8 miles.

This means another postponement of the mine-laying off Cape Myshako. In order that the boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla, which are particularly dependent on the weather when carrying mines, may be at readiness for other operations at any time, I have given orders that the mines already on board are to be returned to store at Ivan Baba. Preparations will be made to ensure that they can be taken on board again within a few hours, so that the minelaying can be done on the first day that the weather is suitable.

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Naval ferry barge F 340 which grounded off Pavlovski on 1 April was taken off with the help of the "Grafenau". "Grafenau" also grounded slightly and damaged her screw.

Two naval ferry barges carrying 51 tons of timber for building engineer constructions in Kerch Strait put in to Theodosia from Yalta. They will continue passage on 3 April.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

FZ-groups, Harbor Defense Flotilla and minesweeping planes broke off operations owing to the weather.

Deep angle-patterned minefield S 54 was laid according to schedule by "Murgescu" on 1 April. Net Barrage Group, Black Sea has completed the work on the anti-torpedo nets at the Dnieper barrage.

Apart from the usual gunfire by both sides, nothing to report from Novorossisk. Several small craft, including 4 M.T.B.s, were detected in traffic with the beachhead during the early hours of the morning.

Enemy Air Activity:

Activity was today restricted to flights over Anapa. 13 bombs were dropped, no damage.

The steamer convoys, which returned to Constantza and Sulina on 1 April owing to the weather, will have to postpone their sailing for another 24 hours as there is still no improvement.

Anapa convoys:

The 2 naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 13, which put in to Kamish Burun on 1 April because of the weather, did not reach Anapa until 1245 as they took the longer route. As they have orders to be at their anchorage off Cape Takil again before dark, there is insufficient time for the unloading to be completed. They will leave Anapa for Takil at about 1500 with half their cargo on board, and have orders to return to Anapa on 3 April to complete unloading. Anapa convoy No. 14 from Kerch will be postponed until 3 April.

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Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic to Taman was resumed at 0400 in unfavorable weather.

The rough sea at the unloading stages prevented the resumption of traffic to Senaya until 1200 when the wind went down. On 1 April all the troops and supplies which were ready at the fish-salting factory were taken off, and today the same feat was accomplished at Taman.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: 381 men, 92 allies, 471 civilians, 188 wounded, 35 trucks, 10 personnel vehicles, 2 motor cycles, 41 horse-drawn vehicles, 144 horses, 86 tons of service supplies, 220 empty barrels, 3 tons of field mail, 2 camels, 20 tons of sheet metal and 2 tons of hides. Also special orders comprising 40 tons of service supplies, 1 ton of field mail and 3 allies.

West-East: 68 men, 1 ally, 934 tons of food, 1 truck, 1 personnel vehicle, 416 tons of hard fodder, 13 tons of raw fodder, 160 tons of preserved fodder, 14 tons of field mail and 3 tons of service supplies.

We have examined the question of whether there is any need to carry on night ferry traffic in Kerch Strait.

Following points were decided:

1. Return transports from the Kuban bridgehead have ceased for the time being.
2. Up to date, we have always been able to meet the Army's demands, even since these were increased to 2,000 tons daily, by using our available shipping space in daylight. There is no reason why, with our present reserves, we should not continue to do so.
3. So far, the Army has always refused to load and unload the barges during the night on the grounds of danger from air raids and the order forbidding employment of prisoners during darkness.
4. Night traffic means increased risk, particularly because of
 - a. the danger that the barges may leave the

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swept channel,

- b. danger of collisions at the harbor approaches and the loading stages,
- c. possible damage to the mooring jetties where there is no lighting.

For these reasons we shall not introduce night traffic unless new and very high demands require it. The necessary preparations will be made so that night traffic may begin immediately should the situation make this imperative.

In a conference with General Korlen, Commanding General of 1st Air Corps, which has been newly drafted to the Crimea, I discussed the very urgent questions of anti-aircraft protection for the harbors and fighter escort for the convoys. Results:

1. Anti-aircraft protection.

- a. Sevastopol. One heavy battery is being moved from Sevastopol to Yalta as immediate strengthening for the anti-aircraft defenses there. One Würzburg installation will be moved immediately from Kerch Strait and set up near Sevastopol. When a long-range Freya installation ordered from home arrives, it will be set up near Sevastopol.
- b. Anapa. At the moment no heavy anti-aircraft batteries are available for Anapa. Any transfers would have to be at the expense of weakening the anti-aircraft defenses of Kerch Strait. However, in a short time 1st Air Corps intends to request 17th Army H.Q. for the release of the anti-aircraft guns used in the land fighting at the Kuban bridgehead to turn them over to defense against air raids. The claims of Anapa would have first priority. In the course of the next few days, 2 fighter Staffeln will be transferred temporarily to Anapa to protect the harbor and the transshipment traffic against air raids.
- c. Tomriuk. Promise given that batteries will be transferred there on release of those still held by 17th Army H.Q.

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2. Fighter escort for convoys.

Commanding General acknowledged our claim for fighter protection for Sevastopol convoys on passage between Cape Tarkhankutzki and Sevastopol. Shortage of fighters makes it difficult to carry out this measure. Consideration of question promised; there is some prospect that our request may be fulfilled so long as demands are not submitted more frequently than once in five days. In view of the lack of fighters, we shall accept this limitation.

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3 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance of the southeastern Black Sea was without incident. No enemy ships were observed. The southern part of the Caucasus coast could not all be examined owing to the bad weather.

Early morning reconnaissance did not detect any enemy ships off our coast or at the beach-head as far as Ghelenjik.

Ghelenjik at 0647: 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,600 G.R.T., and 30 boats; at 0705 1 coastal vessel of about 400 G.R.T. and 1 patrol vessel 5 miles south of Ghelenjik; at 0738 2 guard-boats, course west, 30 miles south of Ghelenjik. Sukhum: 2 coastal vessels. Poti: 2 coastal vessels, each of 600 G.R.T., and several boats. Tuapse at 0837: 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T., and 7 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 G.R.T.

Lichtenstein planes carried out night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea and the Caucasus coast without result. Main Naval D/F Station did not detect any movement of large ships in the radio picture. Submarines detected: 2 off the east coast and 1 in an unidentified position.

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Yalta - Novorossisk: N-NE winds, force 5, overcast, showers, visibility 3 - 5 miles.

1530 U 24 put in from her operation.

1810 Freight towing vessel "Adelheid", tug "Rheinkontor 2", 2 lighters and 4 naval ferry barges put in to Kerch. "Adelheid", "Rheinkontor 2" and the lighters are to join the Kerch-Taman and Kerch-Temriuk ferry traffic.

The naval ferry barges brought 320 tons of timber from Yalta to Kerch.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

Minesweeping was continued with 3 sets of towed loop gear on the Kerch-Yenikale route.

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No mines swept. The Harbor Defense Flotilla was searching a new route immediately north of Kossa Tuszla and clear of the 2-meter line. This route is intended as an alternative should the present Kerch-Taman route be closed owing to mines.

Anapa convoys:

The 2 naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 13 put in to Anapa at 0920 and, after unloading the rest of their cargo, put out at 1300.

Anapa convoy No. 14 put out about 1600 with 3 naval ferry barges. They were carrying 140 tons of fuel, 10 tons of anti-aircraft ammunition, 15 tons of 2 cm. armor piercing shells, 74 tons of food and 6 tons of field mail.

A fourth naval ferry barge has been added to this convoy to build up a stock of fuel for the barges in Anapa. She carries 55 tons of Diesel fuel, 1 crane and 1 motor generator.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The condition of the roads on the Taman Peninsula has so deteriorated owing to the continued rain that only very limited quantities of supplies can be moved from the jetties at Taman and Senaya. This has resulted in blockages at the unloading points. The naval ferry barges which put in at the eastern side today could only be partially unloaded. There were only a few men and very small quantities of material ready for the return convoy. Times of arrival of return convoys on 4 April cannot be given.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

West-East: 952 tons of supplies.

East-West: 307 men, 327 civilians, 1 personnel vehicle, 8 trucks, 5 horses, 80 tons of service supplies, 2 guns and 55 bottles of oxygen.

21 naval ferry barges and 1 lighter made 23 west-east crossings, while 19 naval ferry barges and 1 lighter made 19 east-west crossings.

The heavy anti-aircraft battery which was moved from Yalta to Sevastopol to strengthen the anti-aircraft defenses there is now ready for action.

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The commander of Russian M.T.B. No. 92 which was sunk off Anapa (see War Diary 13 March) made the following statement:

1. The Russian submarine arm in the Black Sea has recently suffered heavy losses, particularly boats of the M class and mainly in Rumanian waters.
2. He knows that during the period November 1942 - January 1943 submarines M 62, M 32 and M 31 were lost. (He was friendly with their commanders.)

Presumably these enemy losses were partly caused by our flanking minefields off the west coast.

In a conference with Lt. General Dostler (Army Group A plenipotentiary for supplies for 17th Army H.Q.) about future movement of supplies for the Army, it was laid down that the 250,000 men and 80,000 horses belonging to 17th Army H.Q. at the Kuban bridgehead require the following:

- a. Supplies: 2,000 tons. This includes a certain amount for reserve.
- b. Construction material: 300 tons (including 100 tons of timber from Yalta).
- c. Railroad equipment: 200 tons.

Total 2,500 tons.

These figures are to be regarded as the Army's final demands.

Unloading points will be:

Taman:	860 tons.
Senaya:	600 tons.
Kossa Chushka:	200 tons.
Anapa:	240 tons.
Tomriuk:	600 tons.

The following amounts can be brought up each day:

$\frac{1}{2}$ trainload	=	250 tons to Theodosia.
3 trainloads	=	1,500 tons to Kerch.
$\frac{1}{2}$ trainload	=	250 tons to Genichesk.

The railroad cannot cope with more than this. The remaining 500 tons must, as already requested, be taken by ship from Sevastopol.

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I have enough shipping space available to meet this demand. When the Kerch-Temriuk and Gonichesk-Temriuk traffic begins, mainly lighters will be used on the Kerch-Taman-Senaya route. 16 naval ferry barges will be set aside for the Gonichesk-Temriuk supply traffic and 12 for the Kerch-Anapa traffic. The freight towing vessels and lighters will be used in the Sevastopol-Kerch and Theodosia-Kerch traffic. The Kerch-Temriuk traffic will probably begin about 10 April, the Gonichesk-Temriuk traffic about 12 April. Up to now, 4 naval ferry barges have been engaged in timber transportation from Yalta to Kerch Strait. As there is a heavy backlog owing to the bad weather and timber is urgently needed in Kerch Strait, Lt. General Dostler requested the number of transports to be increased.

I have therefore given orders that in future 6 naval ferry barges will be engaged on this task.

In reply to an inquiry, 8th Air Corps and Naval Liaison Officer, Army High Command informed me that at present there is no waterway for ships between the Volga and the Don.

The Russian project of a Volga-Don canal has not been completed. This means that it is not possible to bring vessels from the Caspian to the Sea of Azov by water. As it is unlikely that the enemy still has vessels on the Don which are suitable for the Sea of Azov, for the present we need only expect to encounter vessels which can be transported by rail e.g. M.T.B.s and small gunboats. According to air reconnaissance, there are only small craft and fishing vessels in the Sea of Azov at present.

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4 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

The southeastern Black Sea and the area south of the Crimea were only partially reconnoitered owing to the bad weather. Nothing sighted.

Visibility varied and the Caucasus ports were only examined as far as Gudauty. No reconnaissance from Sukhum to Batum owing to the weather. Slight traffic of towed convoys in and out of Ghelenjik, similar traffic to Tuapse. The tanker (7,000 G.R.T.) which put in to Tuapse on 2 April is no longer there. Usual shipping in the ports as far as observed.

At 0720 1 towed convoy (2 tugs, 3 ships totaling 1,500 G.R.T.) put in to Ghelenjik, while 1 tug towing 2 vessels totaling about 1,000 G.R.T. put out.

Two patrol vessels were sighted 5 miles southwest of Tuapse; at 0745 1 towed convoy comprising 3 ships putting in to Tuapse; another towed convoy of several ships totaling 1,300 G.R.T. southeast of Gagri. In the forenoon Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 gunboat with course set for Cape Doob - Kabardinka (not confirmed by air reconnaissance).

D/F Station, Constantza detected 1 destroyer at 1410 off Tuapse; she was not detected by the Air Force. Submarines detected: 3 probably in the central Black Sea on return passage and 1 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts:
NW winds, force 3 - 4, changing from bright to cloudy, good visibility, showers in the evening.

1st E-Boat Flotilla has orders to put out from Ivan Baba at 1400 with 4 boats on operations against enemy supply traffic proceeding under the Caucasus coast. The boats are to operate in pairs until one hour before daylight, the first pair in the area between Tuapso and Cape Idokopas, the other pair between Uchdere and

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Adler. The reason for choosing the attack area for the second pair so far southeast is to allow them, if opportunity arises, to pick up the enemy supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik. Experience has shown that this traffic waits until dawn before entering the area known to be threatened by our E-boats.

Anapa convoys:

At 1400 after unloading their cargo, 3 naval ferry barges began return passage from Anapa to Kerch (Anapa convoy No. 14).

At 1530 4 naval ferry barges (Anapa convoy No. 15) put out with 242 tons of ammunition, 80 tons of fuel, 1 ton of food and 12 tons of field mail.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

Minesweeping planes (Ju) checked the direct Kerch-Yenikale route to a width of 400 meters. They covered the route six times, but no mines were swept. The route has now been searched 32 times to a total width of 400 meters. Check completed. New route off Kossa Tuszla was buoyed and then swept with combined sweeps. No mines swept.

At 0530 a mine exploded astern of a combined operations ferry outside the Kerch-Taman route. Boat was slightly damaged. No casualties.

2325 Report arrived from 1st E-Boat Flotilla that the boats had to break off their operation owing to the weather.

The repairs to the Ivan Baba net barrage have been completed; there are 2 rows of nets, making the anti-torpedo defense again effective.

Nothing to report from Novorossisk apart from usual exchanges of gunfire. A few vessels were observed near the landing area during the night and early morning.

There has been a noticeable absence of enemy air activity during the last few days. Apart from the bad conditions at the airfields caused by the heavy rain, this lull may perhaps be due to shortage of fuel brought about by the loss of the 2 tankers (1st E-Boat Flotilla on 13 March, U 24 on 31 March).

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Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The bad condition of the roads at Taman and Senaya continues to create difficulties for transport and hence for unloading. With the heavy storm continuing, there is no immediate prospect of an improvement.

Today the east-west traffic was almost at a standstill, as there were no troops or material ready to be taken off.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: 268 men, 210 civilians and
5 trucks.

West-East: 862 tons of service supplies,
80 tons of building timber and
145 tons of construction material.

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5 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Lichtenstein planes working with 1st E-Boat Flotilla were searching off the Caucasus coast and at 0020 on 5 April located 1 ship off Tuapse. Night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea to protect our convoys reported no incidents. Daylight reconnaissance had to be broken off owing to the bad weather. Ghelenjik was partially, Sochi completely examined. There was no shipping traffic observed in the area as far as Sochi.

In the early morning Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported several boats, 1 large barge being towed out to sea from the landing point, and at 0440 1 gunboat proceeding from Kabardinka to the landing point.

Lichtenstein planes had no locations off the Caucasus coast as far as Tuapse during the night of 5/6 April. No night reconnaissance over the central Black Sea as the plane was not clear for flying.

At 1946 Main Naval D/F Station located 1 submarine about 55 miles south of Theodosia. At 0233 1 destroyer coming from the southeast was detected in the Adler area. Apart from movement of small vessels, there was 1 submarine detected off the east coast and 1 south of the Crimea.

Own Situation:

0300 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in from the uncompleted operation off the Caucasus coast.

One pair of boats was in a lurking position in air grid square 6653 from 2100. In poor visibility with heavy rain and winds increasing to N, force 6, the operation was broken off at 2150. Up to that time they did not meet with any shipping traffic. The other pair of boats also turned back at about 2100 while on passage to their attack area further to the southeast of Sochi.

The weather prevented the boats from operating against the vessel detected by the night reconnaissance planes at 0020.

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Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 14 put in at 0820. Nothing to report. The naval ferry barges put out again from Anapa at 1240 with 324 empty barrels, 16 barrels of fat, 74 barrels of oil, 20 tons of copper and 5 motor vehicles.

At 1835 the formation returned to Kerch.

Anapa convoy No. 15 succeeded for the first time in reaching Kerch again before dark, thus avoiding having to anchor overnight in Kerch Strait.

At 1545 Anapa convoy No. 16 put out from Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges carrying 323 tons of ammunition, 20 tons of fuel and 6 tons of field mail.

Sevastopol-Constantza and Crimea convoys ran according to plan. Nothing to report.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

Minesweeping was continued with 3 sets of towed loop gear. No mines swept. A minesweeping plane (Ju) re-checked the route from Kerch to Taman. No mines swept. No operations during the afternoon on account of low-lying cloud.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Condition of roads unchanged. There is again a transport bottleneck at the unloading points and Taman and Senaya can only take limited quantities of supplies. Further consignments are being delayed.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: 601 men, 8 civilians, 5 trucks, 1 personnel vehicle, 42 horse-drawn vehicles, 154 horses and 3 tons of service equipment.

West-East: 6 men, 90 tons of fuel, 6 tons of field mail, 71 tons of food, 164 tons of fodder and 200 tons of ammunition.

Enemy Air Activity:

No enemy air activity over Kerch Strait and the Crimean harbors during the day.

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Situation at the Novorossisk beachhead unchanged. Sites at the east harbor and the northwestern and southern parts of the town were bombarded by artillery and rocket-firing guns.

Between 0400 and 0500, several boats put out to sea from the landing point; 1 gunboat was observed proceeding from Kabardinka to the landing point.

To make things more difficult for enemy submarines, it is a good policy to change the convoy routes between Constantza and Sevastopol as often as possible. Some of the convoys will therefore proceed from Constantza via a point 10 miles south of Cape Sarich, then on course 000° to Cape Sarich and finally close to the coast via route Brown to Sevastopol.

In order to cut down possibilities of enemy interference (air raids, attacks by surface forces) to a minimum, these convoys are to be timed to reach Cape Sarich at dawn so that

- a. they put in to Sevastopol not later than 3 hours after dawn and hence are exposed to aerial torpedo attacks for only a short time,
- b. they are close to the coast at dawn and are protected by the coastal batteries against surface attacks.

Relevant orders have been issued to Commander, Convoys and Escorts.

At a conference with Lt. General Dostler, Army Group A plenipotentiary, the following arrangements were made for the start of the Tomriuk traffic when the northern entrance to Kerch Strait is free from ice:

1. Kerch-Tomriuk convoys will be running to Tomriuk by 9 April.
2. 1,000 - 1,200 tons will be carried on first and second days, then 600 tons daily.

Naval Special Transport Staff has instructions to carry out minesweeping as follows before the start of the traffic:

- a. Minesweeping planes to check supply route in the northern part of Kerch Strait between Yenikale and Cape Achilleon for standard mines.
- b. Route from the northern entrance to Kerch Strait to the entrance to Tomriuk channel

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to be searched for moored mines.

- c. Check for standard mines in Temriuk channel.

It is particularly important to check the Temriuk channel, as the sinking of one ship there would block the route completely until salvage operations could be carried out i.e. for a considerable period.

So long as the first supply vessels proceed with anti-mine escort, there is no need to search the route between the northern entrance to Kerch Strait and the entrance to Temriuk channel for moored mines. Apart from motor minesweeper R 30, there are naval ferry barges equipped with towed loop gear available as escorts.

Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch will begin this minesweeping on 6 April. Provided that no mines are found, the provisional date for the first convoys will be 8 April.

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6 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance was not exhaustive owing to the weather. Only slight activity of patrol boats and patrol vessels off the Caucasus coast from Ochamchiri to Ghelenjik. No enemy ships sighted in the southeastern Black Sea.

Harbors from Ghelenjik to Ochamchiri were not examined on account of the weather.

Poti: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light cruiser in dock and 1 merchant ship of 7,300 G.R.T. No other vessels observed on account of oblique view.

Batum roads at 1221: 3 tankers, each 7,000 G.R.T., and 1 tanker of 2,000 G.R.T. Harbor not examined because of the weather.

Lichtenstein planes had no locations during night reconnaissance.

At 1515 Main Naval D/F Station detected 1 destroyer and 1 torpedoboat off the central part of the east coast. At 1935 an exact D/F bearing revealed this destroyer in the Adler area. At 1730 another destroyer was detected off the central part of the east coast, probably with 2 torpedoboats. The destroyer reported in the Adler area on the night of 5/6 April was detected in the evening in the Tuapse area with 2 torpedoboats, 2 minesweepers and 1 M.T.B. One submarine was located in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Yalta - Novorossisk: NW winds, force 5 - 6, decreasing in the afternoon, overcast, showers, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Road conditions on the eastern side unchanged, rain continuing. The cargo discharged at the unloading points on 5 April had to be piled up, as transport was impossible. Hence there was only a limited amount of supply traffic. The mooring jetties at Taman could not be used after

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The minesweeping plane (Ju) checked the new route from Kerch to the fish-salting factory off Kossa Tuzla. Although the area had already been swept with oropesa gear, the plane swept 2 mines in 45° 14.1' N, 36° 36.2' E.

Motor minesweeper R 30 swept the route from Yenikale to Temriuk with oropesa gear. No mines swept.

Two motor minesweepers (FR) were transferred from Kerch to Temriuk to sweep the Temriuk - Kuban channel.

Motor minesweepers R 35, R 36 and R 165 have orders to sweep route Brown from Theodosia to Sevastopol with oropesa gear, 15-meter pendant at dawn on 7 April.

When the area off the north coast of the Sea of Azov is free from ice, I plan to begin supply traffic from Genichesk to Temriuk on about 10 April. This will require sweeping of the approach route to Genichesk approximately off Ostrov Birinchi, as it may well be that there are still some of our own mines from the Genichesk harbor defense minefield in Genichesk Bay.

This task will be done by the boats of Group Genichesk, Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov which are at present still in Mariupol.

Naval Port Commander, Mariupol has orders to transfer the boats to Genichesk as soon as the weather permits.

Group South, Sea Transportation suggests in Gkdos. 717/43 that part of the Aegean supplies should be taken via the Danube to Russia, from there by rail to Varna and from Varna by ship through the Dardanelles to the Aegean. These ships should then be able to join the tanker convoys which leave Constantza with oil for the Aegean at regular intervals of from 4 to 6 weeks.

I sent the following reply to Naval Group South:

- "1. Our experiences with sea transport from Burgas and Varna to the Bosphorus in the summer and autumn of 1942 were rather unhappy. Some of the transports were attacked and sunk by Russian submarines inside Bulgarian territorial waters.

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1500 on account of the rough seas.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: 441 men, 195 civilians, 5 trucks, 78 horses, 35 horse-drawn vehicles, 5 tons of cotton and 4 tons of hides.

West-East: 31 men, 1 motor cycle, 200 tons of ammunition, 4 tons of field mail and 623 tons of supplies.

In view of the difficulties of transport from Senaya and Taman, Army Group A requested me through Lt. General Dostler to increase the supplies to Anapa for the next few days. In view of the bottleneck, I have decided to meet this request and have given orders that for the next few days there are to be 2 Anapa convoys daily. The first convoy will put out in the afternoon to anchor off Cape Takil before dawn as usual, continue passage to reach Anapa about 0700 and then, after unloading, commence return passage.

At about 1100 the second convoy with 4 naval ferry barges will leave Kerch at about 0500, put in to Anapa at about 1100 and, after unloading, begin return passage at about 1500, anchor at darkness off Zhelezni Rog and put in to Kerch at dawn the next day. These 7 naval ferry barges should be able to carry about 600 tons daily.

Anapa convoys:

At 0715 Anapa convoy No. 16 put in to Anapa with 4 naval ferry barges. After unloading and taking on return cargo, the boats left at 1300 and anchored off Kamish Burun about 1900.

At 1650 Anapa convoy No. 17 put out from Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges, carrying 188 tons of ammunition, 85 tons of preserved fodder and 65 tons of fuel.

Naval ferry barges F 170 and F 331 today left Kerch for Yalta to bring timber.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

The FZ-group was operating with 2 sets of gear on the Kerch-Yonikale route. No mines swept.

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2. Representatives of the Russian Consulate and agents would certainly soon learn about the sailing of the ships from the Bulgarian ports and would report this to the enemy, who would direct their submarine operations accordingly. In my view, the above-mentioned Russian submarine attacks came about in this way.

To link up the proposed Varna-Aegean transports with the valuable tanker convoys from Constantza to the Bosphorus would increase the danger for the tankers and hence for the whole oil supply for the Mediterranean."

In their situation report, Army Group A stated that the enemy is constantly and without hindrance bringing up supplies and troops to the Novorossisk beachhead at night.

It is impossible for our naval forces to suppress this traffic which, according to our daily observations, is carried on almost exclusively by small vessels from Kabardinka Bay or Ghelenjik. On the nights when the weather situation permits, our own and the Italian E-boats have from time to time been sent against the supply traffic but they are unable to pick up the vessels running from Kabardinka Bay to the landing point in Novorossisk Bay.

On the nights when the prevailing E winds here prevent the E-boats from making the passage to the operational area, more than 100 miles distant, and it is impossible to transfer them early enough to Anapa, a favorable base under such conditions, the enemy can still maintain their supply traffic with small vessels in the lee of the coast between Ghelenjik and the beachhead and we cannot do anything to hinder them. Another point is that most of their ships are sighted in the period shortly after dawn when our forces must already be on return passage.

The vessels at my disposal, so far as they are suitable for this task, are every one without exception used against the enemy supply traffic. The only time when they do not operate is when the weather prevents them from using their armament.

According to statements from prisoners, Stalin has issued an order for the mopping-up of the Kuban bridgehead. As far as they remember, the text was as follows: "All Germans must be cleared from the Kuban bridgehead as soon as possible.

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There can be no retreat. The most important task is to take Novorossisk and Krimskaya. In the event of failure, more reserves must be pushed in. Tank support will be given."

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7 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance did not sight any enemy shipping in the southeastern Black Sea. No movements detected off our coast or in the Ghelenjik-Tuapse coastal area. Poti and Batum were not observed owing to the weather. Usual shipping in Ghelenjik and Tuapse.

At 0740 in the sea area off Ochemchiri 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T. and 3 patrol vessels, course southeast; at 0755 another tanker convoy (2,000 G.R.T.), course southeast, 10 miles west of Sukhum; 1 merchant ship of 3,000 G.R.T., 2 minesweepers and 3 patrol vessels, course northwest, about 20 miles south of Tuapse; at 0741 1 motor minesweeper, course east, one guardboat stopped and 2 flying boats north of Sukhum.

Night reconnaissance south of Kerch Strait and over the coastal waters from Ghelenjik to Sukhum had no locations.

The 2 destroyers detected yesterday at sea by Main Naval D/F Station were again detected today, proceeding southeast and northwest. The radio picture did not reveal any other movements of large ships. Submarines detected: 1 in the central Black Sea and 5 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Yalta - Novorossisk: Variable winds, mainly NE, force 3 - 4, slowly veering from W to S, overcast, showers on the north Caucasus coast, visibility 2 - 5 miles.

From the forecast it should be possible for the E-boats to operate off the Caucasus coast. 1st E-Boat Flotilla has therefore been ordered to repeat the operation against enemy supply traffic broken off on the night of 4/5 April because of the weather. On the night of 7/8 April one pair of boats is to proceed to the area between Tuapse and Idokopas and the other to the area between Uchdere and Adler. They are to put out at 1430.

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1400 The meteorological station at Simferopol reported passage of a storm in the area south of Kerch Strait. During the evening and night, W to SW winds, increasing to force 6 in the Theodosia - Novorossisk area. Poor visibility and showers off the Caucasus coast.

In view of this new forecast, I canceled the operation for 1st E-Boat Flotilla.

At 1308 and 1326, Naval D/F Station, Theodosia had an approximate bearing of 100° on a destroyer. 1st Air Corps has been requested to fly reconnaissance over the south Crimean and north Caucasus coasts or, if this is impossible before dark, to send up night reconnaissance planes with radar sets, concentrating on the northeastern part of the Black Sea.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Road conditions on the Taman Peninsula are unchanged. Supplies unloaded at Taman and Senaya can only be taken away with caterpillar vehicles and hence only in small amounts. No real improvement can be expected in the next few days. As all the possibilities for storing are now exhausted, until the conditions for road transport improve the barges will limit their loads to the amounts which can be taken away to the east.

Transportation figures were therefore low:

East-West: 380 men, 5 civilians, 5 trucks, 8 horse-drawn vehicles, 25 horses and 2 tons of field mail.

West-East: 33 men, 1 truck, 322 tons of ammunition, 6 tons of field mail and 302 tons of food.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 16 put in to Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges at 0650. They carried 55 tons of equipment, 24 tons of oil, 17 tons of empty barrels, 1 ton of field mail and 1 trailer.

Anapa convoy No. 17 put in to Anapa at 1045 with 4 naval ferry barges and, after unloading, put out again at 1330 and anchored north of Cape Takil at 1905.

Anapa convoy No. 18 put out from Kerch at 1745 with 3 naval ferry barges carrying 170 tons of ammunition, 74 tons of preserved fodder, 34 tons of fuel and 1 ton of field mail.

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As the weather deteriorated in the evening with S winds, force 6, the naval ferry barges could not anchor off Cape Takil during the night and therefore put in to Kamish Burun at 1900.

Temriuk convoys:

Following 2 check sweeps of the Temriuk-Kuban channel, during which no mines were swept, Temriuk convoy No. 1 put out from Kerch at 1800. The convoy was led by motor minesweeper R 30, which provided the anti-mine escort along with 2 naval ferry barges; the other vessels were the freighters "Adelheid" and "Theben", each with 1 lighter, 4 naval ferry barges loaded with cargo and 1 empty barge for evacuation of wounded. Total carried: 2,146 tons.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

The FZ-group checked the route from Kerch to Yenikale for ground mines on both sides of the line of buoys. Three covering runs were made, using 2 widths of sweep. No mines swept.

The Temriuk-Kuban channel was checked for ground mines and moored mines using basket gear. No mines swept.

There were no operations by the minesweeping planes owing to the weather and conditions at the airfield.

Motor minesweepers R 35, R 36 and R 165 swept the route from Theodosia to Sevastopol with oropesa gear. No mines swept.

A mine detonated north of Kossa Tuszla without apparent cause. Presumably this is an enemy mine with a self-destruction arrangement consisting of a clockwork ignition device, as found by Mines and Barrage Command, Kerch near Kossa Tuszla on 1 April (see War Diary 1 April).

The evacuation of the troops brought back from the Caucasus front - insofar as they are not required for the Gotenkopf bridgehead - is now largely completed. Naval Liaison Staff, Kerch and the vessels engaged on this task will now be concerned with the transport of the supplies for the troops remaining at the Gotenkopf bridgehead (for the present about 2,500 tons daily). The vessels are to proceed

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on the Kerch-Taman (Senaya), Kerch-Temriuk, Kerch-Anapa, Theodosia-Taman and Genicheski-Temriuk routes. Apart from supplies, there will also be a flow of leave and convalescent personnel, and perhaps fresh troops from both west and east.

After the conclusion of the operations now in progress at the Gotenkopf bridgehead, 2 divisions are scheduled for withdrawal. When this has been done, I expect that Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch expressly appointed for this purpose will be withdrawn. I am therefore submitting the following suggestions to Group South:

1. As from 20 April, Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will include the western side of Kerch Strait in the area under his command (up to now Kuban bridgehead). He will be responsible for administration and operation of the gun batteries.
2. Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch should not be withdrawn before the second half of May. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus will then move to Kerch and take over the former duties of Naval Special Transport Staff, some of whose members will join his staff and remain responsible for transportation duties.

Nothing to report from Novorossisk apart from the usual exchanges of gunfire.

At 0430 1 boat was sighted at the entrance to Kabardinka Bay.

No enemy air activity throughout the command area during the last 24 hours.

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8 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance of the southeastern Black Sea, carried out in good visibility, was without result. Reconnaissance was flown over the Caucasus coast and harbors up to and including Batum and some photographs were taken. No reconnaissance of the Chobi estuary owing to fighter defenses. Only partial reconnaissance of Batum.

Small vessels (motor minesweepers, minesweepers and submarine chasers) were active in the sea area from Adler to Ochemchiri. No vessels were sighted in the remaining areas. Usual shipping in the ports of Gholenjik, Tuapse and Sochi. No shipping in Adler or Gudauty. Sukhum (aerial photograph): 2 freighters, each 2,800 G.R.T., 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T., 1 floating dock and 1 coastal vessel. Ochemchiri (aerial photograph): 2 submarine tenders, 7 submarines, 9 motor minesweepers and 3 coastal vessels. Poti (aerial photograph): the battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in dock, 1 light cruiser, 2 destroyers, 3 minesweepers, 8 submarines, 8 motor minesweepers, 11 M.T.B.s, 2 cruiser hulls, 1 submarine accommodation ship of 8,500 tons, 1 tanker of 2,000 G.R.T., 12 coastal vessels totaling 5,000 G.R.T., and 2 floating cranes. Batum (visual reconnaissance): 2 heavy cruisers, 2 destroyers, 1 passenger ship of 9,000 G.R.T. and 4 freighters, each 1,500 G.R.T. Batum roads: 3 freighters, each 4,000 G.R.T., 4 tankers each 7,000 G.R.T., one of them probably burnt out.

Reconnaissance planes on the night of 8/9 April located a convoy of 3 vessels 5 miles south of Adler. Shadowers maintained contact until 0235. Main Naval D/F Station located 1 destroyer at 1535 in the sea area west of Sochi-Adler. At 0200 she was in the Ochemchiri area. Submarines detected: 2 in the east coast area.

The destroyers, which according to D/F Station, Theodosia were in the Tuapse area yesterday, were not sighted by air reconnaissance today.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and north Caucasus coasts: Variable

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winds, mainly S, force 6; for a short period in the afternoon W, decreasing, showers at intervals; visibility 8 - 10 miles.

Group South has sanctioned the transfer of the western side of Kerch Strait to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus (see War Diary 7 April).

Net Barrage Group, Black Sea reported that the anti-torpedo nets at Theodosia harbor entrance are very much damaged and far from effective. The outer row is completely destroyed, the inner row less damaged. As the start of supply traffic from Theodosia to Taman will soon entail a great deal of shipping in Theodosia harbor, the enemy may well be tempted to repeat their earlier torpedo attacks by M.T.B.s. The repair of the barrage is therefore an urgent necessity.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea/Ukraine and Net Barrage Group, Black Sea have been ordered to carry out the repair work immediately.

The commander of the "Arkadia" and "Succeava" convoy now proceeding from Constantza to Sevastopol with 2 Rumanian destroyers and 3 motor minesweepers as escorts has received orders from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea that the destroyers are not to put in to Sevastopol along with the rest of the convoy, but are to wait outside until the motor minesweepers return with the "Lola" and "Varna" convoy. The purpose of the order is to avoid exposing the destroyers to air attack in Sevastopol harbor.

I cannot agree with Commander, Convoys and Escorts, since the destroyers would be exposed to the danger of attack by submarines and planes, both with bombs and aerial torpedoes, while they are outside Sevastopol harbor. It would be safer for them to spend the waiting period in Sevastopol Bay inside the harbor defense barrage. The destroyers could stand on and off, so that, while completely protected from submarine attack by the defense barrage, they would be only slightly exposed to the danger of attack from torpedo planes. Another consideration is that the anti-aircraft defenses at Sevastopol could also help to ward off air raids on the destroyers in the harbor.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts has been instructed to let the destroyers put in to Sevastopol and to point out that they can stand off and on.

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Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The roads in the Taman Peninsula are still impassable for trucks. The quantity of supplies taken across still depends on the transport possibilities, as all the storage space in Taman and Senaya is full.

The unloading stages in Senaya could not be used after 1400 owing to the SW winds, force 6 - 7. Traffic was stopped. Ferry traffic and unloading operations were not disturbed by enemy interference.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: 389 men, 287 civilians, 1 motor cycle, 4 horse-drawn vehicles, 8 horses and 3 tons of field mail.

West-East: 19 men, 1,682 tons of supplies and 217 tons of construction material.

13 naval ferry barges, 2 lighters and 2 freight towing vessels made 14 west-east crossings.

Six naval ferry barges and 1 lighter made 7 east-west crossings from Senaya, while 2 naval ferry barges made 2 east-west crossings from Taman.

Temriuk convoys:

Temriuk convoy No. 1 put in to Temriuk at 0730 without incident. At 1800, after the naval ferry barges and freight towing vessels had discharged their cargo, the formation put out again on return passage to Kerch led by motor minesweeper R 30. The 2 lighters did not return with them. Next Temriuk convoy will be on 10 April.

Anapa convoys:

At 0445 Anapa convoy No. 19 put out from Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges carrying 119 tons of ammunition, 73 tons of hard fodder and 126 tons of fuel.

Strong S winds forced the formation to put in to Kamish Burun at 1630. There are now 3 naval ferry barges from Anapa convoy No. 18 and 4 naval ferry barges from Anapa convoy No. 19 in Kamish Burun ready to put out as soon as the weather improves.

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At 0700 4 naval ferry barges from Anapa convoy No. 17 returned to Kerch. Nothing to report.

The timber transports and other Crimea convoys had to be postponed for 24 hours on account of the weather.

Two destroyers and 3 motor minesweepers brought the "Lola" and "Varna" convoy from Sevastopol to Sulina and Constantza without incident.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

The supply route in the northern part of Kerch Strait was checked three times by a minesweeping plane (Ju) to a width of 400 meters on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept. FZ-groups could not carry out their scheduled operations owing to the weather.

Following the mine detonation by skid gear on the outward route from Sevastopol on 28 March, the route has been checked eight times with towed loop gear and noise box (turbines). No mines swept so far. Minesweeping will be continued during the next few days.

Motor minesweepers R 35, R 36 and R 165 encountered rough sea while searching the Sevastopol-Theodosia route and could only sweep the stretch from Brown 7 to Brown 13. No mines swept.

Enemy Air Activity:

Taman was repeatedly attacked between 1900 and 2000. Altogether 26 bombs were dropped. No damage to naval property.

At 2200 planes were seen dropping mines on the Taman-Senaya route. Confirmed by Freya gear. Route to Senaya closed. FZ-groups, Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch and the minesweeping plane (Ju) will make a check on 9 April.

Novorossisk reported that Russian guns and searchlights had been active for brief periods. The beachhead and the northern part of the town had been under bombardment. No traffic to the mooring jetties at the beachhead was observed. 20 TMB mines were laid at Novorossisk harbor entrance and basin unobserved by the enemy.

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9 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance, flown in good weather, detected the following: 1 freighter of 1,500 G.R.T., course east, off the Turkish coast about 15 miles northeast of Giresun and 1 passenger ship of 2,500 G.R.T. putting in to Trabzon. No enemy ships in the remaining southeastern Black Sea. Only partial reconnaissance of the east coast; Poti and Batum not examined. As far as examined usual shipping in the harbors.

At 0852 motor minesweepers were proceeding off Sochi harbor at high speed, course south-east; at 0833 3 motor minesweepers put out from Ochmchiri; off the harbor 1 merchant ship of about 1,000 G.R.T., 2 motor minesweepers and 1 submarine, course south.

Night reconnaissance had no locations.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza did not detect any movement of surface vessels. Submarines detected: 3 off the east coast in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and north Caucasus area: S winds, force 5 - 7, overcast, occasional showers, visibility 6 - 10 miles.

After completing overhaul in dock, the group of motor minesweepers (RA) is now at readiness. Commander, Convoys and Escorts has been ordered to transfer them to Kerch, making use of them as convoy escorts while on passage. They will be there subordinated to Commander, Danube Flotilla and will be available to Naval Special Transport Staff for minesweeping and escort duties in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The condition of the roads has improved, so that for the present transport is possible under difficulties. The route to Senaya, closed on account of suspected mines, is still

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not open. The naval ferry barges and combined operations ferries which put in there during the last few days were unloaded today. Traffic to Taman was maintained without hindrance.

Transportation figures (Navy only):

East-West: None.

West-East: 15 men, 200 tons of ammunition, 100 tons of fuel and 2 tons of service supplies.

Anapa convoys:

The naval ferry barges of Anapa convoys Nos. 18 and 19 waiting to put out from Kamish Burun had to remain there today as there was no improvement in the weather.

At 1700 3 naval ferry barges (Anapa convoy No. 18) put out for the anchorage off Takil. They are to continue passage to Anapa about 0300 on 10 April.

Anapa convoy No. 19 is scheduled to put out from Kamish Burun about 0500 on 10 April.

Temriuk convoys:

At 0600 the freight towing vessels and naval ferry barges of Temriuk convoy No. 1 returned to Kerch. They brought back 373 men, 331 tons of service supplies and 3 tons of field mail.

The 2 naval ferry barges which are to be used as timber transports started passage from Kerch to Yalta.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait: The place on the Taman-Senaya route where minelaying was observed on 8 April has been checked with 3 sets of towed loop gear, noise box (turbines) and oropesa gear in an area 1,000 by 600 meters. So far no mines swept. The search will be continued on 11 April.

Enemy Air Activity:

Between 2100 and 2400, 10 bombs were dropped on Taman in 3 attacks. No damage to naval property. No air raids or enemy reconnaissance activity during the day.

Apart from the usual gunfire, nothing to report from Novorossisk. No beachhead traffic observed, no supply traffic detected.

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At 2245 1 gunboat was observed at the entrance to Novorossisk Bay, caught by searchlight.

Motor fishing vessels armed with 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns have begun a coastal patrol off the Mius Peninsula and in the Taganrog harbor area.

A Führer directive has laid down that the Crimean coast should be provided with defenses similar to the West Wall. Apart from an increase in the number of gun positions, this will mean the provision of extra radar stations.

I have submitted the following plans to Naval Group South:

"First Priority

1 surface watching radar station at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait (Cape Takil).

2 surface watching radar stations to protect Sevastopol, to be sited on the north and south shores of Cape Khersonese. (One station is not sufficient, as there is no site with an overall coverage.)

1 air reporting radar station on Cape Kys Aul, southwest of Cape Takil and a second air reporting radar station on Cape Aitodor to work with the surface watching station already there.

Second Priority

1 surface watching radar station near Cape Chauda, where there is a proposed site for a battery.

1 surface watching radar station on Cape Meganom.

Third Priority

1 surface watching radar station on Tarkhankutzki (southwest of Ak Mechet).

1 surface watching station near Cape Eupatoria.

Since Cape Takil is regarded as an immediate priority, preparations are going ahead to transfer the radar station up to now near Cape Aitodor (surface watching station). If however we can secure a new station with the requisite personnel from home by the end of April, we should not

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need to dismantle and transfer the station from Cape Aitodor. This would be extremely advantageous as it would avoid any interruption of the radar service and save us the double transport."

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10 April, 1945

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance did not observe any ships in the southeastern Black Sea. The coast was very hazy and no shipping traffic was observed in the whole coastal area.

At 0205 1 freighter of 1,500 G.R.T. and 3 patrol vessels, course southeast, were sighted 10 miles northwest of Sukhum.

Poti at 1445: 1 battleship, 1 heavy and 1 light cruiser and 4 merchant ships, each 4,000 G.R.T. Tuapse at 1245 (aerial photograph): 1 freighter of 4,000 G.R.T., 1 merchant ship of 1,500 G.R.T. and 1 of 1,000 G.R.T., 1 small merchant ship of 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,800 G.R.T., 3 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s and 1 floating crane. Sochi at 1441 (aerial photograph): 3 motor minesweepers and several boats. There was no shipping in Adler, Gudauty or Gagri. Ochetchiri at 1511 (aerial photograph): 7 submarines, 4 motor minesweepers, 2 submarine tenders totaling 3,000 G.R.T., 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 G.R.T. and a few boats. Sukhum at 1522 (aerial photograph): 1 freighter of 2,500 G.R.T. (clipper stem), 2 motor minesweepers, 15 boats, 1 M.T.B., 1 coastal vessel, 1 floating dock and 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T. (old).

The Lichtenstein planes did not locate anything on their night reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast. At 2235 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk picked up 1 torpedoboat in the searchlights, course Cape Doob-landing area.

Main Naval D/F Station detected 1 destroyer in the evening; presumably she had put out from one of the bases. Otherwise only increasing activity of small vessels. Submarines detected: 3 in the central to western Black Sea and 1 in the east coast area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Yalta - Novorossisk: At first S winds, force 4 - 5, then veering N - NE, varying cloud, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

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- 1010 A Russian DB 3 plane attacked a towed convoy from a height of 1,800 meters. Escorted by 2 naval ferry barges, the convoy was on passage from Theodosia to Yalta on a level with Cape Meganom. Four bombs which fell about 100 meters away from tug "Kiel" had no effect. Our anti-aircraft defenses had no success.
- 1220 Tanker "Prodromos", escorted by 2 Rumanian gunboats and 2 naval ferry barges, was attacked by 2 planes while on passage from Constantza to Sevastopol. Off Cape Eupatoria the planes flew over 4 times, dropping altogether 10 bombs causing slight splinter damage to "Prodromos" above her waterline.

When the bombers flew over the second time, there came a simultaneous attack from 2 torpedo planes from a height of about 10 - 15 meters. They dropped 3 torpedoes on "Prodromos" from a range of 500 meters; she succeeded in evading them. After the close of the torpedo attack came another bomber attack on "Prodromos", this time with 4 bombs, no damage. Anti-aircraft fire from 7.5, 3.7 and 2 cm. guns was without success.

With reference to the arrangements made with Commanding General, 1st Air Corps (see War Diary 2 April), on 8 April I sent another letter pointing out the importance of the sea-borne supplies for Army Group A and the Crimea. As we have only a small number of vessels available, fighter protection against air attack is imperative. I emphasized that the failure of the torpedo and bomb attacks on the supply steamers is not due to their defenses, but to the fact that the attacks have not been carried out with sufficient forcefulness.

So far, there have been occasional attacks in the sea area off Eupatoria (as in the case of "Prodromos"). Today's incident has provided me with an occasion for again asking 1st Air Corps to provide fighter protection for the convoys during their passage from Cape Tarkhankutzki to Sevastopol and to make the necessary planes available immediately.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Although the roads close to Taman and Senaya are drying, there is as yet no steady flow of transport for the piled-up supplies, since the traffic is jammed in the hinterland where the roads are still in poor condition.

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The ferry traffic to Taman ran without hindrance from enemy action.

The route to Senaya, which was closed yesterday when minelaying was observed, was still not open today.

Transportation figures:

East-West: 41 men and 15 tons of service supplies.

West-East: 100 tons of ammunition, 100 tons of fuel, 16 caterpillar tractors and 3 rail trucks.

Temriuk convoys:

At 1800 Temriuk convoy No. 2 put out with 2 towing vessels, 1 lighter, 4 loaded naval ferry barges and 1 empty barge for evacuation of wounded. They carried 160 tons of ammunition, 191 tons of fuel, 22 tons of field mail, 705 tons of fodder, 203 tons of food, 222 tons of building material and 30 tons of engineer equipment i.e. a total of 1,533 tons. The formation was led by motor minesweeper R 30. Minesweeping was done by R 30 and 2 naval ferry barges.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 18 ran according to plan.

At 1820 the naval ferry barges returned to Kerch without incident.

At 0400 Anapa convoy No. 19 put out from Kamish Burun with 4 naval ferry barges and, after unloading, began the return passage from Anapa at 1530. The formation anchored off Cape Takil at about 1900.

At 1630 Anapa convoy No. 20 left Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges for the anchorage off Cape Takil. They will continue passage early on 11 April. They carried 100 tons of fuel, 166 tons of ammunition, 86 tons of hard fodder and 5 tons of field mail.

Two naval ferry barges carrying timber proceeded from Yalta to Theodosia. They will continue passage to Kerch early on 11 April. Two naval ferry barges went today from Theodosia to Yalta to take on timber.

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Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait: The stretch of the route from Kerch to Senaya which was closed owing to minelaying was today searched by 2 FZ-groups. They swept the area four times to a width of 200 meters on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept. They went on to search for ground mines while escorting a convoy of 7 naval ferry barges, 5 combined operations ferries and 1 tug from Senaya to Kerch. Nothing to report. A minesweeping plane checked the closed stretch to a width of 400 meters five times without result. The plane had to break off on account of engine trouble.

At 2045 enemy planes caught in the searchlights were seen dropping mines between Yenikale and Kossa Chushka. FZ-groups and the minesweeping plane will check the route on 11 April.

Group Wetzol submitted a request that civilians evacuated from the Gotenkopf bridgehead should be brought by naval ferry barge from Anapa to Kerch.

I shall not grant this request, because:

1. The route from Anapa to the southern entrance to Kerch Strait has no flank protection and is exposed at all times to enemy attack by superior naval forces.
2. The transport of civilians by sea is expressly forbidden by Führer directive.

I shall inform Group Wetzol that they can be taken either by the old route from Senaya-Taman-fish-salting factory to Kerch or by the new supply route from Temriuk to Kerch.

According to an Army High Command order, the office of the Plenipotentiary General of the Army (Lt. General Dostler) is to be abolished forthwith. This office was created to look after sea and airborne supplies to the Gotenkopf bridgehead for 17th Army H.Q. Its work, which is closely connected with the ferry traffic in Kerch Strait, will be taken over by Chief Quartermaster, Army Group A.

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11 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

There was no daylight reconnaissance of the southeastern Black Sea owing to the bad weather. The Caucasus coast and harbors were examined up to and including Ochemchiri. In the strip examined which extended about 50 km. out to sea, there was no shipping apart from 3 submarine chasers outside Ghelenjik, Sukhum and Ochemchiri respectively. Ghelenjik at 1120: merchant shipping totaling about 4,300 G.R.T., 2 motor minesweepers and 25 boats and 1 motor minesweeper outside the harbor. Little change at Tuapse from the previous day, no change at Sochi. Sukhum (aerial photograph): 1 freighter of 1,500 G.R.T., 1 minesweeper and 1 motor minesweeper. Ochemchiri at 1511: 2 submarine tenders, 2 coastal vessels, 5 submarines and 4 motor minesweepers.

There was no night reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and south of the Crimea owing to the weather.

D/F Station, Constantza reported increasing activity of small vessels during the evening and at night. Otherwise no movements of larger vessels discernible in the radio picture. Submarines detected: 1 in the central Black Sea and 3 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts:
NW winds, force 5 - 6, rain, overcast,
visibility 4 - 7 miles.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Roads on Taman Peninsula now dry and passable. Traffic to Taman continued unhindered and according to plan.

The Senaya route, closed because of suspected mines, is still not open. There is therefore only a limited amount of traffic with minesweeper escort.

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Transportation figures:

East-West: 280 men, 154 wounded, 19 allies,
190 civilians and 1 ton of field
mail.

West-East: 11 men, 5 tons of field mail,
200 tons of ammunition and 458 tons
of supplies.

Temriuk convoys:

At 0400 Temriuk convoy No. 2 put in without
incident. After the freight towing vessels
and naval ferry barges were unloaded, the
formation was joined by the two empty lighters
from Temriuk convoy No. 1 and, led by motor
minesweeper R 30, began the return passage
to Kerch at 1830.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 20 ran as scheduled without
incident. The naval ferry barges returned
to Kerch at 1850.

Anapa convoy No. 21 put out from Kerch at
0430 with 3 naval ferry barges carrying
158 tons of ammunition, 82 tons of fuel,
1 ton of field mail and 5 tons of naval
supplies. They put in to Anapa at 1100.

At 1530 5 enemy planes made a low-level attack
on Anapa harbor. Naval ferry barge F 139
(belonging to Anapa convoy No. 21) was
slightly damaged. One man killed. Light
anti-aircraft guns of Naval Port Commander
and the Air Force put up defensive fire.

One enemy plane was shot down by anti-aircraft
guns belonging to Naval Port Commander (naval
shore anti-aircraft guns) and hits were
scored on another plane.

The enemy's daily air reconnaissance has clearly
recognized the significance of Anapa as a supply
harbor. It was only thanks to a lucky accident
that today's attack did not do some major
damage to the unloading stages with their large
stores of ammunition, fuel and other supplies.
In view of the heavy supply traffic to Anapa
and the intended transfer of operational forces
there, we must expect further air raids.
The present anti-aircraft defenses are by no
means adequate to ward off heavy attacks.

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With reference to my conference with Commanding General, 1st Air Corps (see War Diary 1 April 1943), I have again requested the immediate transfer of heavy anti-aircraft batteries to Anapa and pointed out that adequate protection for the harbor is essential for the maintenance of supplies for the troops of 17th Army H.Q. at the Gotenkopf bridgehead.

At 1700 Anapa convoy No. 22 put out from Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges carrying 224 tons of ammunition, 100 tons of fuel, 2 tons of gun equipment and 2 tons of field mail.

With the improvement in road conditions on Taman Peninsula, supplies can again be moved by truck from Taman and Senaya to the east. We can therefore discontinue the risky procedure of having 2 Anapa convoys daily.

After contacting Army Group A, I gave orders that as from 12 April there will again be only 1 Anapa convoy daily, for the present with 4 naval ferry barges. If 4 barges are used, we should be able to guarantee the daily transportation required by the Army, i.e. 240 tons.

Novorossisk reported lively activity of enemy reconnaissance patrols at the beachhead and increased enemy air activity. Bombs dropped on some harbor sites. Usual exchanges of gunfire. Between 2400 and 0300, landing craft were observed proceeding from Cape Doob to the landing site.

Minesweeping Activity:

The group of motor minesweepers (FR) continued sweeping the Senaya route with towed loop gear and noise box (turbines). One vessel with towed loop gear and Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch with oropesa gear swept the closed route between Yenikale and Kossa Chushka to a width of 200 meters on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept. Neither of the minesweeping planes in Kerch could be used today owing to engine trouble.

Enemy Air Activity:

Repeated bombing attacks on Tomriut and Anapa on the night of 10/11 April. The attacks prove that the enemy is seeking to damage the supply bases for the Kuban beachhead and chooses those with the least anti-aircraft protection for their attacks.

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Owing to the weather situation and the assembly of the E-boats and Italian E-boats for the special operation (see Appendix to War Diary on operation "Neptune"), there has been rather a long pause in E-boat activity. I therefore intend to send the 3 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla lying in Theodosia against the traffic to the beachhead on 12 April. I am doing this because I am convinced that the Army and Air Force may still have to wait a few more days for suitable weather for the special operation and I cannot afford to let these slip by with no activity against the supply traffic. Also this will give the new flotilla commander and his commanders an opportunity to get accustomed to these waters gradually.

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12 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance of the southeastern Black Sea was carried out in visibility of from 3 to 10 km. with rain at times. One submarine chaser was discovered about 45 miles northwest of Poti. At 0945 no enemy ships were detected off our coast. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors was difficult owing to the weather. Ghelenjik was only partially examined and the other harbors were not examined owing to poor visibility and at times low-lying cloud.

At 1150 2 coastal vessels, course southeast, and 1 M.T.B. were detected off Ghelenjik; at 1300 1 M.T.B., varying courses, 35 miles southwest of Ochemchiri, at 1415 1 patrol boat 35 miles west of Tuapse and another boat off Tuapse; also another patrol boat off Poti.

Reconnaissance on the night of 12/13 April was flown only as far as Sukhum where it had to be broken off owing to the danger of icing. Nothing sighted.

At 1125 Main Naval D/F Station reported that according to radio traffic the cruiser "D" was at sea, probably off the southern part of the east coast. No more exact details could be ascertained from the radio picture up to 0500 13 April. Submarines detected: 4 in the central to western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0800 The vessels of Temriuk convoy No. 2 returned to Kerch. Freight towing vessel "Theben" grounded slightly and damaged her rudder and screw. She will not be ready for the next convoys. Otherwise nothing to report.

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts:
N winds, force 6 - 7, in the eastern part
force 4 - 5, mainly overcast, rain in the
eastern part, visibility 3 - 6 miles.

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During recent nights shore observers have repeatedly seen small vessels proceeding to and from the landing area near Myshako. Although experience has shown that these reports from untrained Army observers are none too reliable, it is possible that supplies may be brought to the beachhead during the night. Interference with this traffic would place the enemy troops at the beachhead, already reported by the Army to be short of supplies, in a very difficult position. In view of the forthcoming Army operations, this opportunity of further embarrassing the Russians is most important.

1100 Despite the unfavorable weather, I have decided to send motor minesweepers R 35, R 36 and R 165 against this supply traffic tonight. With the prevailing N winds they should be able to proceed to the operational area directly under the coast.

The motor minesweepers have orders to put out for Anapa via route Brown at 1200. They will leave Anapa in time to reach the sea area between Cape Myshako and Cape Doob at 2330,

Task: To attack enemy supply and patrol vessels.

At about 0300 the boats will begin return passage to Anapa and will remain there at readiness for operation "Neptune".

1940 Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported that since 1800 the wind has been increasing from the south up to force 6, sea 4, and it is doubtful whether the boats will be able to use their armament. I gave him instructions to break off the operation if in his view the weather would make the execution of his task impossible.

2200 U 19 will be ready to put out for the operation on 14 April.

As U 24 was forced to return from the operational area on account of trouble with her port engine, and under the present weather conditions it is impossible to fix a definite date for the start of operation "Neptune", I have decided to assign U 19 to the task originally planned for U 24. After completion of this operation, U 19 is to proceed against enemy supply traffic in the area between Cape Uchdere and Gagri. U 19 has orders to put out on the northern route about noon on 14 April.

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Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

The unloading of the naval ferry barges and combined operations ferries in Taman and Senaya was hindered by heavy rain. Road conditions have recently deteriorated so that transport is again meeting with difficulties.

Ferry traffic to Taman was carried out according to plan without enemy interference. The vessels proceeding to Senaya were accompanied by minesweeper escort. The closed route will be opened again on 13 April.

Transportation figures:

East-West: (from Senaya and Taman):
323 men, 2 civilians, 5 tons of field mail and 20 empty barrels.

(From Temriuk):
278 men, 37 civilians, 176 tons of service supplies and 1 gun.

West-East: 17 men, 1 personnel vehicle, 364 tons of supplies, 12 tons of field mail and 70 tons of building material.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 22 (4 naval ferry barges), which anchored off Cape Takil at darkness on 11 April, and Anapa convoy No. 23 (3 naval ferry barges), which put out from Kerch at 0400 today, completed their passage without incident.

Convoy No. 23 carried 100 tons of ammunition, 60 tons of fuel and 80 tons of hard fodder.

Timbor transports:

Two naval ferry barges carrying 150 tons of wood for the Army's use in Kerch Strait left Yalta to proceed via Theodosia to Kerch.

Minesweeping Activity:

The closed routes to Senaya and between Yenikale and Kossa Chushka were checked by towed loop gear nine and five times respectively, using double breadth of sweep on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

The minesweeping plane (Ju) had to break off its check of the northern entrance to Kerch Strait after a short period owing to engine trouble.

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Of the 3 minesweeping planes which have in the past been assigned to 1st Air Corps, two are now under repair at Kerch and one is in Germany. 1st Air Corps reports that of the 3 minesweeping planes recently assigned to them, one has been more than a week in transit from Germany to Kerch. The other two have not yet arrived in Wesermünde, the delivery point.

I have requested 1st Air Corps to make every effort to get the planes at readiness as soon as possible, as they are urgently required for the resumption of supply traffic in the Sea of Azov.

On the question of the supply traffic from Varna via the Bosphorus to the Aegean (for my comments, see War Diary 6 April) Group South passed me their opinion as follows:

1. Supply traffic between Varna and the Bosphorus does not offer the Russians any better target than the much larger volume of traffic between Constantza and Sevastopol. The danger from submarines and torpedo planes is equally great on both stretches.
2. The danger of surprise attacks by surface forces is no greater than for the other Black Sea convoys.
3. In view of the critical supply position in the Aegean, the risk must be taken.

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13 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance incomplete on account of the weather. In the whole area, only 1 coastal vessel was sighted at 1340 west of Poti.

Ghelenjik at 0800: 1 coastal vessel in the harbor and 35 boats. Tuapse: 1 freighter of 4,000 G.R.T. less than on 12 April. No reconnaissance from Ochemchiri to Batum on account of the weather. Shipping in other harbors unchanged.

Night reconnaissance did not locate any shipping traffic. No movement of large ships in the radio picture. Slight activity of small vessels. Submarines detected: 3 in the central to western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0057 U 24 reported that she had begun return passage from the operational area to Constantza.

0500 Motor minesweepers R 35, R 36 and R 165 returned from their night operation against enemy supplies to the beachhead.

Outward passage and execution of operation greatly hindered by the bad weather. They began return passage to Anapa at 0300. No supply traffic or patrol activity observed. They discovered that there is a barrage of searchlights between Cape Doob and Cape Myshako which sweeps the entrance to the bay every 10 minutes.

The flotilla commander used the operation as an opportunity for reconnaissance of his operational area for "Neptune".

Weather permitting, I intend to repeat the operation during the coming night.

0800 E-boat S 51 at readiness after engine overhaul. She has orders to move to Ivan Baba as soon as the weather permits.

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Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Kerch - Novorossisk: S - SE winds, force
5 - 4, overcast, showers, visibility 3 - 5
miles.

1600 The tanker "Prodromos" put in to Sevastopol
escorted by 2 Rumanian gunboats. This
convoy was the first to have the protection
against air attack on the route between
Cape Tarkhankutzki and Sevastopol as requested
from 1st Air Corps.

As fighters were not available today, the air
cover was provided by 6 ground attack planes.
They flew 12 patrols in all, each time with
2 planes, covering the convoy until it
finally put in to Sevastopol.

Weather forecast:

1800 Kerch - Novorossisk: SE winds, force
4 - 5, decreasing to force 4, showers,
visibility close to the coast 1 mile, at
sea 5 - 8 miles.

The weather thus permits the minesweepers to
repeat their operation of last night. The
high coast gives some protection against
SE winds. During the present moonlit nights,
poor visibility favors the boats in their
position close to an enemy coast which is
heavily protected by guns and searchlights.

The boats have therefore been ordered to
repeat the operation against enemy supply
traffic to the Myshako beachhead. The flotilla
commander is at liberty to break off the
operation if in his view the weather prevents
the boats from using their armament.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic to Taman and Senaya was without
incident. 15 naval ferry barges were
used.

Transportation figures:

East-West: 134 men, 114 wounded, 278 civilians,
16 gun carriages and 19 tons of
empties.

West-East: 15 men, 92 tons of ammunition,
90 tons of service supplies,
100 tons of fuel, 9 tons of field
mail, 66 tons of fodder, 84 tons
of food and 480 tons of building
material.

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Temriuk convoys.

At 1700 Temriuk convoy No. 3 put out, led by motor minesweeper R 30. The other vessels in the convoy were "Tisza", 4 naval ferry barges carrying cargo, 1 tug with a lighter and 1 naval ferry barge for bringing back wounded. They carried 435 tons of ammunition, 1,176 tons of food, 126 tons of fodder, 15 tons of field mail, 1 ton of building material, 1 personnel vehicle and 8 men.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 24 ran according to plan with 4 naval ferry barges. The naval ferry barges returned to Kerch at 1815.

Anapa convoy No. 25 put out at 1630 with 4 naval ferry barges carrying 162 tons of fodder, 105 tons of ammunition, 43 tons of wire and 12 tons of clothing. The convoy anchored near Cape Takil before dark to continue passage at dawn on 14 April.

Army Group A sent in another request for 2 convoys daily to Anapa until 18 April, as the roads on Taman Peninsula are again in bad condition. I granted the request.

Timber transports:

Two naval ferry barges carrying timber put in to Kerch.

Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait:

The FZ-groups made 7 covering runs over the route between Yenikale and Kossa Chushka on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept. From 1700 the FZ-boats swept for ground mines ahead of Temriuk convoy No. 3.

The minesweeping planes were under repair and were not out at all.

General situation at Novorossisk quiet, only slight exchanges of fire. Situation at the beachhead unchanged.

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14 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance inexhaustive owing to the weather. Poti, Batum and the Chobi estuary were not examined on account of fighter defenses. Usual shipping in the other harbors so far as examined.

Motor minesweepers and small motor boats about 10 - 15 miles apart were patrolling the Tuapse-Poti area. Apparently they were detailed to report planes. At 0820 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T. with 3 escort vessels, probably course northeast, was sighted in the Poti area. Five coastal vessels were putting in to Ghelenjik. No other traffic sighted.

At 2025 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 small vessel proceeding from Cape Doob to the landing area. Night reconnaissance planes had no locations.

Main Naval D/F Station detected 1 destroyer at 0030 off the east coast. At 0045 according to the radio picture, cruiser "D" was at sea. No further information up to 0500.

Own Situation:

0500

Three motor minesweepers put in to Anapa from their second operation against enemy supply traffic to the beachhead. The boats stood in lurking positions between Suchuk and Cape Myshako about 0.8 - 1 mile off the coast until 0300. They had a good view of the enemy landing points, but nothing special was observed. They did not encounter any enemy supply or patrol vessels last night either. They discovered that the Suchuk Reef light buoy is lying about 1,000 meters west of its proper place at the southeastern edge of the shallow (2.4 meters). The light from the buoy can be seen at a distance of about 1,000 meters. Remembering the difficulty the flotilla will have on operation "Neptune" because of the presence of our own minefield there, this light buoy should be a valuable navigational aid.

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Southern entrance to Kerch Strait and north Caucasus coast: SE - E winds, force 4, overcast, isolated showers, visibility 2 - 4 miles.

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I have received a message from Army Group A that operation "Neptune" will begin on 16 April at the earliest. I have therefore decided that, with the weather as at present, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will operate against the enemy supply traffic today. One pair of boats will be northwest, the other pair southeast of Tuapse.

1100 Orders were issued to the flotilla to put out from Ivan Baba and proceed first to Anapa keeping close to the Crimean and Taman coasts and then to the operational area at dusk. Boats are to remain there until one hour before dawn and then return to Anapa.

The boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla which have been out on two successive nights are to rest tonight.

1330 U 19 put out from Constantza.

1400 1st E-Boat Flotilla put out from Ivan Baba with 4 boats.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Ferry traffic and unloading operations were hindered by rough seas at the unloading point at Taman and by showers of rain. The roads are muddy making truck traffic difficult. No interference from the enemy.

17 naval ferry barges made 18 west-east crossings, while 15 naval ferry barges made 15 east-west crossings.

Transportation figures:

East-West: 312 men, 378 civilians,
11 horse-drawn vehicles,
26 horses and 36 tons of service supplies.

West-East: 26 men, 803 tons of service supplies, 150 tons of building material and 32 tons of obstruction material.

Anapa convoys:

At 0400 Anapa convoy No. 25 continued passage to Anapa with 4 naval ferry barges. After unloading according to plan, they began return passage about 1300. The barges returned to Kerch about 1815.

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At 0410 Anapa convoy No. 26 left Kerch with 3 naval ferry barges, carrying 83 tons of fodder, 40 tons of wire and 110 tons of ammunition. They put in to Anapa at 1035, put out again with return cargo at 1445 and anchored off Cape Zhelezni Rog at 1800. They will continue passage at dawn on 15 April.

At 1710 Anapa convoy No. 27 put out with 3 naval ferry barges; they anchored at 1840 in Kamish Burun roads. They were carrying 181 tons of preserved fodder and 75 tons of ammunition.

Temriuk convoys:

At 1800 the vessels of Temriuk convoy No. 3 began return passage to Kerch. "Tisza" could not be completely unloaded in the time available and began return passage with about 200 tons of cargo still on board. As this was such a small amount and there was the danger of air raids in Temriuk to be considered, Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch did not think it worth while to postpone the return passage for 24 hours. I agree with their decision.

Timber transports:

At 0800 2 naval ferry barges left Kerch to proceed to Yalta to take in timber. There are now 6 naval ferry barges engaged on timber transportation.

Minesweeping Activity:

The FZ-groups continued their minesweeping on the closed route between Yenikale and Kossa Chuchka. 22 covering runs have now been made south of the line of buoys using double width of sweep. No mines swept. The minesweeping plane (Ju) which was operating on the same stretch checked the route five times on both sides of the line of buoys to a total width of 200 meters. No mines discovered.

Nothing to report from Novorossisk. Quiet at the beachhead. Slight artillery bombardment of Novorossisk harbor.

The enemy today attacked the Gotenkopf bridgehead on both sides of the Abinskaya-Krimskaya road with strong forces supported by tanks.

CONFIDENTIAL

A breach 4 km. wide was made in our front. The enemy also penetrated to a depth of 4 km. and is now at the eastern outskirts of Krimskaya.

I think that this attack was made with the intention of tying down our forces and thus relieving the beachhead south of Novorossisk. The Russians could not have failed to notice our preparations for the forthcoming operation against that area.

I have informed Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus that 1st Air Corps has now complied with my request - repeatedly submitted ever since the start of the Anapa convoys - to transfer heavy batteries to Anapa. The batteries are meant to protect both the harbor and the airfield. According to 1st Air Corps, they have been placed about 1.5 km. from the harbor and should therefore be in a good position to give protection against air attack.

I have instructed Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to see whether the guns are really well-placed and, if necessary, to suggest an alternative site. As there are only 2 batteries, they will only be able to give a small degree of protection in any case.

I have received instructions from Naval Group South to have a channel swept through the Russian mined area off Cape Khersonese to give us a direct approach to Sevastopol from the west.

Owing to the lack of motor minesweepers which were all required as escorts for supplies and Kerch Strait ferry traffic, this important task which I have frequently had in mind has so far always had to be postponed. Now that return transport from the Gotenkopf bridgehead has practically ceased, I shall turn over these tasks to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea. In addition to the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla (after completion of "Neptune"), I shall place some naval ferry barges at his disposal. To make navigation through the swept channel easier, a radio beacon will be set up on Cape Khersonese.

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15 April, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast was flown only as far as Tuapse owing to the weather. The harbors from Sochi to Poti were not examined.

At 0515 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 3 vessels and at 0535 1 vessel proceeding from west to southeast. Air reconnaissance made out 1 damaged freighter of about 2,000 tons (old), 2 coastal vessels (old) and 4 landing craft (old) at the landing point. Ghelenjik at 0721 (aerial photograph): 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 6 coastal vessels, 3 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s and 40 boats. Tuapse (oblique view): 6 coastal vessels and several boats. The Army reported 2 destroyers, 6 guardboats and 2 freighters putting in to Ghelenjik at 1040, but despite good visibility these were not sighted in the sea area from Ghelenjik to Tuapse.

Apart from 2 M.T.B.s on southeasterly course in the Ghelenjik area, nothing was sighted off our own or the Caucasus coast.

Night reconnaissance had no locations worth mentioning.

Main Naval D/F Station did not discover any large ships in the radio picture. Movements of small vessels mainly off the northern and central parts of the east coast. Submarines detected: 3 in the central to western Black Sea and 3 in the area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

0810 The boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla returned to Anapa. The first pair (S 27 and 28) were in the Idokopas area from 2150 to 0200. At 0127 in air grid square 6651, S 28 sank a coastal vessel of about 300 G.R.T. from a convoy proceeding northwest, escorted by several gunboats. This pair had to break off their operation at 0200 because one of S 28's engines failed.

The second pair (S 47 and S 102) took up a lurking position in air grid square CL 9187 from 2300 to 0300. They did not meet with any shipping traffic or patrol activity. S 28 again at readiness at 0900.

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0930 U 24 put in to Constantza. She was forced to break off her short operation between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse owing to trouble with her port engine. Otherwise nothing to report.

U 9 will be at readiness on 17 April. Her operational area will be the area between Cape Uchdere and Cagri. She is to proceed there by the southern route.

Weather forecast
(Simferopol 0930):

Yalta - Novorossisk: NE winds, force 5, decreasing a little, bright, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

From the weather forecast it should be possible for 1st E-Boat Flotilla to repeat the operation in the Tuapse area. On the other hand the smaller Italian E-boats will not be able to go out. Acting on the assumption that "Neptune" will be again postponed, I have decided to let 1st E-Boat Flotilla repeat last night's operation with 4 boats. Relevant orders have been issued. They will proceed on receipt of a codeword to be issued after the decision of Army Group A regarding "Neptune" has been received.

1240 Orders were issued to Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla that on the night of 15/16 April he is again to proceed with R 35, R 36 and R 165 to the area between Myshako and Cape Doob and there operate against enemy supply traffic to the beach-head and enemy patrols. The boats are to put out from Anapa at dusk, remain in their attack area until 0300 and then return to Anapa.

Commander, Danube Flotilla has suggested the exchange of the 4 motor minesweepers (FR), now on convoy duty, for the Danube vessels of the minesweeping group (FR) which are operating with towed loop gear in Kerch Strait.

I have agreed to his suggestion, firstly because the Danube vessels, one group of which is already engaged in convoy escort duties on the Ochakov-Odessa-Sulina route, are more seaworthy and have a greater radius of action, and secondly because shallow-draft motor minesweepers are urgently needed in Kerch Strait where enemy planes have been dropping moored mines.

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The exchange is to take place when the Danube vessels bring a towed convoy from Odessa to Sevastopol.

1900 Information was received from Army Group A that "Neptune" will not take place before 17 April. 1st E-Boat Flotilla has orders to put out for the operation with one pair of boats northwest and the other southeast of Tuapse.

2000 1st E-Boat Flotilla and 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla left Anapa for their operations.

Group Genichesk, Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov today left Mariupol for Genichesk.

They will probably begin minesweeping on 17 April so that the Genichesk traffic can begin about 19 April if the weather is favorable.

Kerch Strait Ferry Traffic:

Traffic was carried on by 13 naval ferry barges in favorable weather without enemy interference. The condition of the roads on the eastern bank has improved.

Transportation figures:

West-East: 38 men, 179 tons of ammunition, 180 tons of food, 28 tons of fodder and 11 tons of field mail.

East-West: 308 men, 214 civilians, 4 trucks, 3 guns, 1,034 empty canisters and 52 empty barrels.

Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoys Nos. 27 and 28 ran according to plan. Convoy No. 28 carried 110 tons of ammunition, 81 tons of fodder, 82 tons of small arms and 40 tons of wire.

At 1635 Anapa convoy No. 29 put out with 3 naval ferry barges carrying 160 tons of ammunition and 74 tons of preserved fodder. They will anchor off Cape Takil at dusk and continue passage early on 16 April.

Temriuk convoys:

At 0700 the vessels of Temriuk convoy No. 3 put in to Kerch again without incident.

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Minesweeping Activity:

Kerch Strait: The FZ-groups and the minesweeping plane continued their operations. No mines swept.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported enemy artillery bombardment of the sites at the east harbor. At 2025 1 small vessel was observed proceeding from Cape Doob to the landing point. Between 0500 and 0600, 4 vessels were sighted coming from the west and proceeding to the southeast. Situation at the beachhead unchanged.

So far, I have not been able to carry out my plans to strengthen the minefields in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait because the naval ferry barges, the only vessels available for carrying mines, cannot be spared from supply traffic.

As the situation has now been relieved a little by the stoppage of return transports from Gotenkopf, and also new ferry barges will arrive in Kerch in about 10 days' time, minelaying should now be possible.

Commander, Danube Flotilla has been ordered to make the necessary preparations for minelaying. FMC mines and explosive floats will be prepared at Mines and Barrage Command, Kerch.

(Signed) Kieseritzky.

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APPENDIX 1

Operation "Neptune"

(Clearing of enemy beachhead south of Novorossisk)

1 April

Simferopol

Army Group A informed me verbally about their plan to mop up the enemy bridgehead south of Novorossisk during the period 6 - 8 April. Three divisions are to be thrown in with air support from 8th Air Corps.

I received a directive from Naval Group South instructing me to support the Army with offensive operations by naval forces. Our objects are to be:

- a. To prevent the enemy from bringing up reinforcements or evacuating troops from the bridgehead.
- b. To tie down enemy coastal defense and light forces by coastal bombardment and landings in the area southeast of Novorossisk as far as Cape Idokopas.
- c. To attack the increased coastal traffic. For this purpose, until such time as the Army complete their operations, U 24's operational area is to be farther northwest.

Anapa is to be the provisional jumping-off base for our offensive forces, necessary equipment to be assembled there.

Preparations to be made for coastal protection after the clearing of the bridgehead.

I have the following vessels available to carry out the Navy's part in these Army operations:

1. 1st E-Boat Flotilla with 4 boats.
2. The Italian E-Boat Flotilla with 6 boats.
3. U 24, at present at sea between Sukhum and Gagri.

So long as we succeed in hiding our preparations from the enemy, thus giving them no time to bring up larger vessels, the enemy traffic to and from the beachhead will probably consist of the small vessels lying in Ghelenjik. I have therefore decided to use 3 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla in addition to those listed above. With their 3.7 cm. guns and bridges protected by armor plating, they are more suitable than the E-boats and Italian E-boats which have only 2 cm. guns and cannot use their torpedoes against small vessels.

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I have therefore given orders for 3 motor minesweepers to move for the time being to Theodosia.

The naval forces are to use Anapa as their jumping-off base, so that, even in unfavorable weather and the prevailing NE winds typical of the Caucasus coast, they can proceed to the operational area in the lee of the coast.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been ordered to get Anapa harbor ready for the E-boats, motor minesweepers and Italian E-boats at the latest by 1900 on 5 April. The following measures must be carried out:

1. Extra berths to be provided by laying mooring buoys.
2. Shore billets to be arranged for the Italian E-boat crews.
3. Provision for about 6 days for all crews to be got ready.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was instructed to supervise these measures personally.

Sufficient fuel for 4 operations for all boats will be got ready in Anapa. It will be transported there by naval ferry barges which will be joined on to the daily Anapa convoys.

If they follow their previous custom, the enemy will probably bring up reinforcements to the beachhead from Kabardinka Bay, Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Any evacuation will probably be carried out by the same route. As the Army operations are receiving strong support from the Air Force, I presume that the enemy will not be able to bring up supplies or carry out evacuation by sea during the day. They will thus be compelled to bring up their naval transports at night. My duty is to prevent this. All my offensive forces will be sent into the area between the beachhead and Tuapse concentrating on the stretch between Myshako and Cape Doob.

I have decided on the following dispositions:

1. 3 motor minesweepers between Cape Myshako and Cape Suchuk directly off the enemy beachhead (their armament makes them the most suitable).
2. 1st E-Boat Flotilla between Suchuk and Ghelenjik, concentrating on the area between Suchuk and Cape Doob.
3. Italian E-boats between Ghelenjik and Cape Idokopas.
4. U 24 between Idokopas and Tuapse.

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In a conference with the Chief of Staff, Army Group A, I was told:

1. The Army will begin operations at dawn on X-day.
2. The Army does not intend to have a diversionary landing southeast of Novorossisk. However, they approve of the suggestion contained in my directive from Group South, that there should be a feint landing between Ghelenjik and Idokopas.
3. As soon as the enemy has been cleared from the beachhead, the Army will immediately take on the task of coastal protection for that area. As strong forces of artillery have been assembled in readiness for "Neptune", adequate protection can be guaranteed.

As the Army operations begin at dawn on X-day, naval forces will not begin their operations until the night of X/X + 1. I shall not send our E-boats and motor minesweepers out on the night before X-day because

- a. I wish to give the crews a chance to save their strength for the main operations on the following nights,
- b. I do not wish to give the enemy any hint of forthcoming operations. The flotillas will move to Anapa in the course of X-day.

U 24 has been at sea since 14 March. She has not sufficient radius of action to carry out her schedule of operations during the fighting for the beachhead - which the Army estimates will last about 3 days, i.e. until 11 April - without first refueling.

U 24 has therefore been ordered to leave her present operational area on 2 April and put in to Theodosia to refuel.

I plan to send her out again on X - 1 day, so that she reaches her projected attack area between Tuapse and Cape Idokopas. at dawn on X-day.

The assembly of forces in Anapa means that the danger of enemy air attack is considerably increased.

I have therefore asked 8th Air Corps to move heavy anti-aircraft batteries to Anapa and hold fighters in readiness at the airfield on X-day.

I have informed Naval Group South of my intentions and the measures taken up to now.

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2 April

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus requested assignment of 1 naval ferry barge to lay mooring buoys in Anapa harbor and to act as supply vessel for the E-boats and motor minesweepers. Naval Special Transport Staff has been ordered to transfer 1 naval ferry barge to Anapa for this purpose.

3 April

The flotillas taking part in the operation received their operational orders based on the points mentioned in War Diary 1 April (orders contained in Appendix II).

I discussed the execution of the operation with Lt. Cdr. Christiansen, Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla and instructed him to have further discussions with Lt. Schneider, the commander of a group of boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and Lt. Schoeler, the commander of U 24, when the boats arrive in Theodosia.

1530

U 24 put in to Theodosia. Her commander reported that the ball bearings of the port electric motor had run out, so that the boat was only at limited readiness.

In view of the special circumstances, I decided to let the boat go on the operation with the proviso that the commander is to turn back if in his view the condition of the motor precludes successful execution of his task.

4 April

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that the berths, billets for the Italian E-boat crews, supplies of food, fuel and water are all ready in Anapa.

I instructed Lt. Schneider, the group commander of the motor minesweepers, on his duties, giving him the precise directions which I considered necessary in view of his youth and the importance of the undertaking. (Flotilla Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla not yet arrived.)

6 April

Owing to the weather, Army Group A postponed the start of the attack on the beachhead provisionally until 7 April.

7 April

Operation again postponed for 24 hours.

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8 April

Army Group A informed me that in view of the present weather and forecast for the next few days the operation will not be carried out until 11 April at the earliest.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla arrived. He will now lead his group in person.

10 April

Owing to the postponements, the operation now falls at a time when the moon is unfavorable for naval operations close to the enemy coast. As the moon does not go down until 0030, I find myself compelled to postpone the feint landing operation by the Italian E-boats from 2300 to 0100.

0930

Army Group A informed me that they intend to start operations on 11 April. The Army codeword for the operation is "Neptune".

Therefore, although the weather would have permitted, there will be no E-boat operations against the shipping traffic off the central Caucasus coast today.

U 24 was ordered to put out at 1230 in accordance with operational orders, Para. B IIa (codeword "Jagdkönig").

1930

Army Group A informed me that "Neptune" must be postponed for another 24 hours as air operations are impossible on account of low-lying cloud.

I am abandoning my plan of sending the E-boats out on a night operation in the Tuapse area. At one hour's readiness and with the passage to the operational area requiring about 5 hours, they could not be there before 0130 and would have to leave at the latest at 0300. As I have not received any special reconnaissance reports and I am faced with the necessity of conserving the boats as much as possible (number of operational hours), I do not consider it worth while to send them out for a maximum period of 1½ hours in the operational area.

11 April

"Neptune" postponed until 13 April.

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12 April

U 24 reported her port motor out of order. This means that, as the Russian Air Force and naval forces will probably put up lively resistance during "Neptune", the boat cannot operate close to the coast.

U 24 was ordered to begin return passage to Constantza via the northern route.

I am hoping that, with further postponements likely, U 19 will return in time for "Neptune".

13 April

"Neptune" again postponed for 24 hours because of the continuing bad weather.

I reported to Naval Group South that the operations against the enemy beachhead have not yet begun and that in view of the weather further postponements may be expected.

14 April

Army Group A informed me that "Neptune" will not begin before 16 April.

1st Air Corps informed me that, according to directives from Army Group A, they will constantly be dropping flares on the night of X/X + 1, so that the enemy movements may be recognized and the conditions of attack eased for our troops.

If flares are dropped over the beachhead, then inevitably the coastal strip must also be lit up. This will make things much more difficult for the boats there, as they will soon be seen by shore observers and enemy naval patrols and driven back by the defenses.

In spite of this radical change in the situation, I am keeping to my operational orders.

I have informed Army Group A of my intentions.

15 April

On the night of 13/14 April, Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla fixed the positions of the enemy searchlights near Cape Doob according to bearings. These searchlights will hinder the movements of our forces between Myshako and Cape Doob and we should aim at putting them out of action at the latest on the first day of operation "Neptune".

I have requested 1st Air Corps for appropriate action, giving my reasons.

(Signed) Kieseritzky.

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APPENDIX II

COPY

Admiral Black Sea
Serial No. Gkdos. 122 AI

3 April, 1943

Operational Orders

A. Situation:

The Army intends to take the enemy beachhead south of Novorossisk in the period 6 - 8 April. Army operations will begin at dawn on X-day.

It is to be expected that the enemy will make every effort

- a. to bring up reinforcements to the beachhead from Ghelonjik and Kabardinka
- b. to evacuate their troops from the beachhead as soon as they are aware that they cannot hold out there.

The Navy's task is to hinder these movements by every possible means, attack enemy naval forces and tie down enemy troops by harassing the coast south of Novorossisk.

B. Orders are as follows:

I. Preparatory measures.

- a. On X-day 6 Italian E-boats on receipt of the codeword "Frühlingsanfang" will proceed from Theodosia to Anapa. Billets for crews, supplies of fuel, food and ammunition have been got ready in Anapa.
- b. The first motor minesweeper group comprising R 35, R 36 and R 165 will proceed from Theodosia to Anapa on X-day on receipt of the codeword "Schneesmelze".
- c. If there are E winds and passage to the operational area at a certain distance from the coast seems doubtful, 4 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will also proceed from Ivan Baba to Anapa on receipt of codeword "Aprilwetter".

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Re paras. B.I.a - B.I.c:

1. Course directions for passage to Anapa:

Via route Brown to point Brown 13,
then via

45° 6' N, 36° 41' E,
45° 4' N, 36° 47' E,
45° 3.5' N, 36° 59' E,
44° 58.5' N, 37° 13' E to Anapa.

2. Enemy minefield off Anapa stretches from

44° 58' N, 37° 8.5' E

to approximately

44° 49.5' N, 37° 8.5' E.

3. Date and time of sailing from Theodosia or Ivan Baba will be given along with the codeword.

4. All boats will be at two hours' readiness with full quota of fuel at 0600 on 6 April.

- d. U 24 will refuel and take in provisions immediately on putting in to Theodosia and will be at two hours' readiness from 0500 on 5 April. Up to that time, minor repairs can be carried out, so long as these do not interfere with her state of readiness.

- e. There will be no Anapa convoys on X + 1 day; on the following days as the situation permits.

II. Operations

- a. U 24 will put out from Theodosia on X - 1 day on receipt of codeword "Jagdkönig" (with date and time) via Brown 13, Brown 12 and then, withdrawing from the coast south of the enemy anti-mine escorts at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait, will proceed to the attack area.

Speed 6 knots. Attack area:

1. From dawn to dusk between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse.
2. From dusk to dawn between Chugovkopas and Tuapse as close to the coast as possible. Torpedo attacks on every worthwhile target. Order to cease operations will be given by radio.

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- b. The Italian E-boat Flotilla will put out from Anapa on X-day with all boats on receipt of codeword "Augustus" and proceed to the attack area between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas.

They will proceed to the operational area about 20-25 miles from the coast. Time of sailing to be fixed so that they reach the attack area at the latest one hour after dark.

Boats will operate against enemy coastal traffic until 2300.

From 2300 the boats will operate in pairs and, by means of coastal shelling, firing of star signals, morse traffic etc., will feint landings at the following points:

1. The Mesib estuary.
2. The Chobi estuary.
3. The Djanko estuary.

Those feint maneuvers will be continued until bombardment from the shore or attack by superior enemy light forces compels them to put out to sea again. They will then put in to Anapa or Theodosia if they require more torpedoes. If they do not meet with superior defenses, the boats will remain in the operational area until 1 hour before dawn.

No anti-submarine measures in the attack area southeast of Idokopas.

- c. 1st E-Boat Flotilla will leave Ivan Baba or Anapa on X-day on receipt of codeword "Schützenfest" and make for the attack area between Cape Suchuk and Cape Doob to be in position 1 hour after dark. The boats will proceed at a certain distance from the coast. If they meet superior enemy defenses between Suchuk and Cape Doob, they will alter course for the area close to the coast between Cape Doob and Ghelenjik.

They will leave the operational area half an hour before dawn and proceed to Ivan Baba, unless there are E winds, in which case they will put in to Anapa even if they have some torpedoes left.

Re B.II.b and B.II.c:

If the weather prevents the boats from proceeding at a certain distance from the coast, the Italian E-boats and 1st E-Boat Flotilla will proceed close to the coast to

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the prescribed attack areas. In that case, the boats must put out from Anapa to be off Cape Utrich when darkness falls.

- d. The first group of motor minesweepers will put out from Anapa at 1800 on X-day on receipt of codeword "Boxkampf" and make for the attack area between Myshako and Cape Suchuk. They will leave the operational area $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours before dawn and return to Anapa close to the coast.

Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will inform the commander of the group of motor minesweepers of the position of our mines off Myshako, enemy mines off Novorossisk and the position of the wreck off Myshako. Aerial photographs of the berthing place at Myshako enclosed.

Re B.IIb - d:

The task of the surface forces is:

Suppression of all traffic between the landing points and Ghelonjik and Tuapse, hence all enemy ships and small vessels to be attacked with guns and if possible torpedoes. Attack on the landing area at Myshako and the vessels there.

Boats to go all out during the operation.

- III. Boats are to expect repetition of the operation on the nights of X + 1/X + 2 and X + 2/X + 3 or postponement if the weather is unfavorable.

- C. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus (for naval shore units) and Naval Liaison Officer to 17th Army H.Q. will take steps to ensure that all coastal stations are, without exception fully informed about our forces' operations and passage close to the coast. Small vessels proceeding between Anapa and Cape Doob can only be shelled on the nights in question if they are clearly recognized as belonging to the enemy. Even when approaching the coast, there is still the possibility that they may be our own boats which have been damaged. If possible, such boats will fire recognition signals.

- D. 1st Air Corps is requested to fly as complete a reconnaissance as possible of the Caucasus coast on X-day and to send up Lichtenstein planes on the night of X/X + 1 from dusk until 2 hours before dawn.

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E. Communications arrangements:

1. E-boats: E-boat wave.
2. Motor minesweepers: E-boat wave.
3. Italian E-boats: According to special orders.

Distribution:

1st E-Boat Flotilla	Copy No.	1
Italian E-Boat Flotilla	" "	2 (2 encl.)
Motor Minesweeper R 35	" "	3 (3 encl.)
U 24	" "	4
Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus	" "	5
Army Group A	" "	6
Naval Liaison Officer to Army Group A	" "	7
1st Air Corps	" "	8
Spares	" "	9-10
(1 copy to War Diary)		

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APPENDIX III

Admiral Black Sea
Serial No. Gkdos. 3007 Nafu

4 April, 1943

Most Secret

Special Communications Order

(Appendix to Admiral, Black Sea Chefs. 122
of 3 April 1943)

Subject: Communications with Italian E-Boat Flotilla

1. Main radio station for Italian E-Boat Flotilla will remain in Theodosia.
2. Second shore radio station for Italian E-Boat Flotilla in Anapa.
3. Routing of Orders:

Admiral, Black Sea will have direct telephone communication with Italian E-Boat Flotilla, Theodosia.

Reconnaissance reports will be passed in plain language. Chief Lampi is always to be available at Italian E-Boat Flotilla as interpreter.

4. In Theodosia direct telephone communication between Naval Radio Station, Theodosia and Italian E-Boat Flotilla.
5. In Anapa direct telephone communication between Naval Radio Station, Anapa and Radio Station, Italian E-Boat Flotilla, Anapa. Naval Radio Station, Anapa will be switched to the command wave.
6. Naval Radio Station, Anapa will pass reports from Italian E-Boat Flotilla direct to Operational Radio Station, Admiral Black Sea at Simferopol on the command wave.

(Signed) p.p. Sigmann

Distribution:

Italian E-Boat Flotilla Theodosia 2 copies
Communications Officer, Crimea/Ukraine at Theodosia
Naval Port Commander, Anapa for Naval Radio Station
1st E-Boat Flotilla, Ivan Baba
Spares 3 copies.

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16 April 1943

Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Day light reconnaissance examined the Caucasus area and harbor as far as Sukhum. Usual shipping in the harbors as far as examined. At 0650:1 convoy consisting of 1 merchant ship of 300 G.R.T., 2 coastal vessels, 2 boats, 2 guardboats, course southeast, medium speed, off Tuapse; at 1250 several boats at Sukhum; motor minesweepers lying stopped 30 miles southwest of Sukhum.

At 0450 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 9 vessels proceeding from west to southeast; at 0450 1 M.T.B. off Kabardinka, 2 vessels off Ghelenjik and 1 medium vessel south of Ghelenjik. Night reconnaissance detected several vessels south of Cape Myshako at 0049. The planes sank one coastal vessel of 300 G.R.T. in this area. Another patrol boat was seen 30 miles west of Tuapse.

No shipping was located in the central Black Sea and off the Caucasus coast. Main Naval D/F Station reported less movement of small vessels off the central to northern parts of the east coast than on the previous day. According to the radio picture no large vessels were at sea. Submarines detected: 4 in the central to western Black Sea and 2 in the east coast area.

Own Situation:

0545 Three boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla put in again at Anapa. They were in their attack area between Myshako and Cape Doob from 2000. As the sky was clear and the boats were between the enemy coast and the moon, the conditions for the operation were not at all favorable. At 2350 they engaged 1 gunboat and 1 M.T.B. on a southeasterly course. The enemy boats were forced to turn back. The action lasted 35 minutes. No casualties. The motor minesweepers went on to bombard the enemy landing stages at Myshako. At 0200 they made another sortie south of Cape Doob but did not encounter any enemy traffic. Our boats were shelled by heavy artillery from Kabardinka Bay. Well-placed fire, but no casualties.

Weather forecast (0930 Simferopol):

Kerch-Novorossisk: N E winds, force 4, cloudy to overcast, rain, visibility 6 - 8 miles.

1000 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in from their operation in the Tuapse area. The first 2 boats were in air grid square CL 9187 from 0100 until 1 hour before dawn without meeting any shipping traffic or patrol vessels. The other two were in a lurking position in air grid square CL 6653 from 2330. There was enemy patrol activity in that area. The boats were picked up several times by searchlights 2 miles southeast of Cape Chugovtopas and fired on by medium batteries. No damage or casualties.

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16 April 1943

1st Air Corps informed me that 2 fighter Staffeln will be transferred to Anapa airfield for the duration of operation "Neptune"; their duties will include the defense of the harbor.

No decision has yet been taken on the question of bombing the enemy searchlight positions at Kabardinka Bay (see Appendix to War Diary 1-15 April on "Neptune" of 15 April).

I have given orders that 3 naval ferry barges are always to be at Sevastopol ready to give protection against submarine or air attack to convoys putting in or out of Sevastopol by the northern route on the particularly dangerous stretch between Sevastopol and Cape Tarkhankutzki. Today for the first time this additional protection was given to the Odessa-Sevastopol towed convoy.

Between 0000 and 0300 Russian M.T.B.'s were twice sighted off Anapa harbor. The boats were fired on by our guns and answered the fire. No hits observed.

1700 Army group A informed me that operation "Neptune" (attack on the enemy beachhead at Novorossisk) has finally been fixed for 17 April.

There will be no operations by our naval forces tonight as I wish to have them all ready without exception to carry out their tasks on the night of 17/18 April in accordance with operational orders. (see Appendix to War Diary 1-15 April, Operation "Neptune").

I decided to go with the 1st Admiral Staff Officer to Anapa on the morning of 18 April, so that I can discuss the experiences of the previous night with the flotilla commanders and make immediate decisions about the next night's operations.

Supply Traffic:

a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

In good weather traffic ran according to plan and without enemy interference.

b) Anapa convey:

Anapa convoy Nos. 29 and 30 ran according to plan with 7 naval ferry barges. Three naval ferry barges of convoy No. 29 returned to Kerch at 1630 and 4 naval ferry barges of convoy No. 30 at 1900. Anapa convoy No. 31 put out from Kerch to the east at 1650. The barges were carrying 160 tons of ammunition and 80 tons of preserved fodder.

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c) Temriuk convoys:

Three naval ferry barges with the remaining cargo from "Tisza" (see War Diary 14 April) and 1 naval ferry barge for bringing back wounded left Kerch at 1830. (Temriuk convoy No. 4)

Minesweeping activity in Kerch Strait:

The FZ-group swept the route from Kerch to Cape Fakil with towed loop gear. One mine was swept in 42° 15.2'N, 36° 26.6E.

The minesweeping plane (Ju) checked the route in the northern part of Kerch Strait. No mines swept.

Enemy Air Activity:

About 60 bombs were dropped on Anapa on the night of 15/16 April. Damage to buildings.

The Heavy air attacks on Anapa are probably the result of enemy observation of the motor minesweepers and M.T.B.'s in the harbor and the constant flow of supply traffic.

Lively enemy air activity over Temriuk throughout the night. No damage to naval property.

We shall have to reckon with the possibility of Russian M.T.B.'s appearing in the Sea of Azov, as the enemy is in a position to bring small M.T.B.'s by rail to Azov harbor (e.g. Yeisk). Enemy M.T.B.'s could thus penetrate from the north into Kerch Strait and defensive preparations must be made to meet them. The few 7,5 cm. guns which the Army have set up at Cape Chroni are not adequate for this purpose. The anti-aircraft batteries which the Air Force has brought to the northern part of Kerch Strait are only conditionally available against sea targets; furthermore it must be remembered that if the focus of activity moves to another front the Air Force will remove these batteries at short notice. It is therefore essential for the Navy to have a battery and the most suitable site is Cape Finar. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea Ukraine has therefore been ordered to look for a site for a battery there. Two 10 cm. guns are available.

A directive was received from Group South ordering immediate preparations for the start of Azov traffic.

I sent the following reply: in accordance with the request from Army Group A, supplies for the Sea of Azov will be taken from Genichesk to Temriuk. Daily amount required is 250 tons (see War Diary 3 April). 16 naval ferry barges are provisionally assigned for this duty. Harbor installations at Genichesk are capable of handling this amount and from our experience last year they are suitable for naval ferry barges.

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The approach route between Ostrov Biriuchi and Genichesk must be swept clear of mines, as there is a possibility that there may be drifting mines from our own defensive minefield which could not be completely swept before the ice set in. Group Genichesk and Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov are to carry out this task. At present they are on passage from Mariupol to Genichesk (See War Diary 15 April). The group of motor minesweepers will sweep the route from Cape Fenar to Cape Ostrov Biriuchi. On completion of their period in dock, they are due to put in the Sevastopol on 17 April on their way to Kerch. They will be stationed in Kerch at the disposal of Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch for minesweeping in the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait.

One group of Donube Flotilla equipped with towed boom gear will be moved from Kerch to Genichesk for operations against EM (I) mines, so that if mines are observed from mine mines etc. the approach route into Genichesk Bay can immediately be checked and kept under constant watch.

Minesweeping plans will check for ground mines on the route between Cape Fenar and Cape Masanti. This route will be busy.

Minesweeping nets arranged by the Air Force Control Service will be set up at the main currents (Cape Biriuchi, Cape Masanti and the narrow passage of Kerch Peninsula).

Lights for night traffic will be set up on Ostrov Biriuchi and Cape Masanti.

There will also be supply traffic from Army Group South from Mariupol to Kerch to be carried out by small boats and landing vessels. Naval Port Commander, Mariupol will send Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov to check the coastal route which was swept clear last year. For monitoring the question of ground mines summer lighters equipped in Constantza are being transferred to Mariupol to protect the supply traffic.

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Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance off our coast did not see anything of the enemy. Slight traffic off the Caucasus coast as far as Ochepchiri and at the main reconnaissance point Novorossisk. Usual shipping in the harbor as far as examined.

Night reconnaissance did not locate any traffic in the central Black Sea and off the Caucasus coast as far as Sukhum. One patrol boat was detected 30 miles west of Tuapse.

Main Naval D/F Station reported increasing activity of small vessels off the northern to central parts of the east coast. No movement of large ships detected. Submarines detected: 3 probably in the central to western Black Sea and 2 in the east coast area.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 9 small vessels coming from the west, course southeast, at 0415. They disappeared in mist. At 0450 there was 1 M.T.B. off Khabardinka Bay. Three vessels were sighted south of Gbelenjik (details not observed). At 1020 2 small vessels coming from the south, stopped in the middle of Novorossisk Bay and disappeared from sight at 1030.

Own Situation:

Weather Forecast (0930 Sinferopol):

Kerch-Noworossisk: S winds, force 4 - 5, cloudy, visibility 10 miles,

1105 Freight towing vessel "Toywala" and 1 lighter escorted by 4 motor minesweepers (FR) were attacked by 5 Russian planes with 30 bombs and 2 torpedoes while on passage from Kalta to Theodosia. Planes were forced off immediately by anti-aircraft fire and were not able to do any precision bombing. No hits on our vessels, no visible successes by our anti-aircraft guns.

Supply Traffic:

a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Ferry-traffic ran between Taman and Senaya according to schedule and without interference. 16 naval ferry barges and a total of 10 lighters were used, some of them for loading and unloading purposes.

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b) Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 31 and No. 32 ran according to schedule with a total of 7 naval ferry barges.

c) Tenriuk convoys:

At 1800 Tenriuk convoy No. 5 put out from Kerch for Tenriuk with "Hidelheid", 1 tug, 1 lighter and 5 naval ferry barges led by motor minesweeper R 30. They were carrying 1,266 tons of service supplies.

d) Timber transports:

Two naval ferry barges carrying 170 tons of timber left Yalta to proceed via Theodosia to Kerch.

Minesweeping Activity:

Groups of motor minesweepers (MR) and two minesweeping planes were operating in Kerch Strait. No mines swept. A check for ground mines on the approach route in to Sevastopol was likewise without result.

Group Genichesk, Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov has also begun checking the approach route to Genichesk following the buoysing of the route. So far no mines discovered.

Enemy Air Activity:

On the night of 16/17 April there were 4 attacks on Anapa in which altogether 67 heavy bombs were dropped. No damage to naval property. Tenriuk was attacked with 17 bombs.

German and enemy artillery activity was reported from Novorossisk. Bombardment of the sites at the east harbor. Lively air activity over the beachhead.

Group South has decided that we should grant the request received from Army Group A for evacuation of civilians at the Gonenkopf position from Anapa to Kerch by naval ferry barge.

I am putting Naval Special Transport Staff, Kerch in charge of the task. From now on they will also be in charge of the Anapa convoys, so far controlled by me direct. Naval Special Transport Staff has been instructed that for the present 4 naval ferry barges are to be used for the Anapa convoys; they will evacuate civilians on their return passage from Anapa. The maximum load is 200 civilians per barge; if fewer are ready they are to be equally distributed among the barges. They are to carry an adequate number of life-jackets and take along rubber dinghies and rafts to be obtained from Sea Transportation Office, Kerch. The evacuation of civilians means that the quantities of stores from the Gonenkopf position must be restricted to the remaining cargo space.

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According to Army Group A, altogether 5,000 - 8,000 civilians are to be brought from Anapa to Kerch. Date for start of evacuation will be communicated later by Army Group A.

Operation "Neptune":

Army operations against the enemy beachhead (Operation "Neptune") began this morning at 0600. This means that all our forces will be out on operations on the night of 17/18 April in accordance with operational order Gkdes. Chfs. 122 (see Appendix to War Diary, Operation "Neptune".)

1st E-boat Flotilla and Italian E-boat Flotilla have been ordered - by codewords "Aprilwetter" and "Fruehlingsanfang" to put out from Ivan Baba and Theodosia for Anapa at 1100 and 1000 respectively.

U 19 will be informed that the attack on the beachhead has begun and that she must expect that reinforcements will be brought from Tuapse tonight.

Naval Special Transport Staff has been instructed to stop Anapa convoys for the present, as with all the operational forces in the harbor no more boats can be massed there and unloading will not run smoothly.

At 1440 Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Anapa with 5 boats and at 1500 the Italian E-Boat Flotilla entered with 7 boats. At 1545 I issued the codewords "Augustus", "Schutzenfest" and "Boxkampf" as executive orders for the operations against the enemy supply traffic to the beachhead.

Contrary to the operational orders, according to which the 1st E-Boat Flotilla would put in to Ivan Baba if the weather were good, Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla has been given orders to put in to Anapa on completion of the operation and only send those boats which have fewer than 2 torpedoes left to Ivan Baba to take in more torpedoes.

The purpose of this measure is to ensure that as far as possible all flotillas are ready in Anapa for operations on the night of 18/19 April. On my visit to Anapa tomorrow I shall take the opportunity of discussing later operations with the flotilla commanders in person.

At 1730 1st E-Boat Flotilla and at 1800 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and the Italian E-Boat Flotilla put out from Anapa for their operational areas.

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Siberopol Enemy Situation:

Day light reconnaissance off our end of the Caucasus coast as far as Batum. Nothing seen of the enemy near the coasts examined. At 0425 Naval Port Commander Hovorossisk reported 8 vessels proceeding from west to southeast.

Ghelongjik at 1118:

8 coastal vessels, 3 motor minesweepers and about 40 boats.

Poti at 1455: (oblique view)

The battleship, 1 heavy cruiser in dock. 4 merchantships each about 4,000 G.R.T., 4 merchant each about 1,500 G.R.T. Cruiser "Krasny Krin" was missing in the oblique view.

Batum roads at 1450:

3 tankers, each 7,000 G.R.T., and 2 freighters, each about 4,000 G.R.T. Heavy fighter patrol activity in the Poti-Batum area. Probably preparations are being made for an operation from this area.

In the sea area off Poti there's 1500 lively activity of small vessels; 30 miles northwest of Poti 1 destroyer and 1 M.T.B.; 25 miles west of Poti 1 destroyer, course mainly northwest and 13 miles south of Poti 13 M.T.B.'s on varying courses. No merchant vessels sighted in the sea area off the Caucasus coast.

Night reconnaissance as far as north of Poti and 50 miles out to sea, concentrating on the Hovorossisk beachhead, did not sight any enemy shipping. 2 burning vessels at the beachhead.

Main Naval D/F Station did not observe any movement of surface vessels, apart from small craft, in the radio picture.

Submarines located:

4 in the central to western Black Sea and 3 in the sea area off the east coast.

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Own Situation:

Operation "Neptune":

0300 The motor minesweepers put in to Anapa again.

From 1940 they were standing off the Myshako beachhead. On entering the attack area they came under fire from heavy batteries in Kabardinka Bay. At about 2100 they intervened in the action between 1st E-boat flotilla and enemy light forces. They were repeatedly machine-gunned and bombed by enemy planes.

One man from the crew of R 35 was wounded by bomb splinters, and 1 2 cm. gun put out of action. After 2400 they were engaged by small enemy vessels 3 times. They had 2 shells of firing on the Myshako landing point. Offensive fire from light anti-aircraft guns (about 4 cm.) on shore. The defense became less active during the early hours of the morning, probably because of shortage of ammunition.

0445 1st E-boat Flotilla put into Anapa with 5 boats. From 1940 to 0300 the boats were in their attack area. At 2000 they fired 8 torpedoes at the 3 landing points between Myshako and Suchuk to interfere with embarkations and destroy the landing stages. According to a report from Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla the following were torpedoed: by E-boat S 47 - a wreck which the enemy was using as a bridgehead and a bridge connecting it with the shore; by S 51 - 1 coastal vessel at the landing stage; by S 72 - a landing stage with wreck used as a bridgehead. Range about 2,400 meters. Six of the 8 torpedoes hit their targets. No defensive fire from shore during the torpedo attack. The flotilla then proceeded to between Cape Suchuk and Cape Doob. At 2055 they engaged 2 enemy M.T.B.s and 3 more small craft. The enemy boats turned off on opposite course under cover of a smoke screen later in the night they were engaged 7 times by enemy gunboats patrolling in the Cape Doob area. At each attack the enemy boats turned off in the direction of Ghelenjik and returned after about an hour. Our E-boats came under fire from coastal batteries several times. The clear moonlight night and their unfavorable position on the horizon made them visible a long way off. The coastal strip was also well lit by free use of flares by our own and enemy planes.

The E-boats did not observe any traffic proceeding to the landing point.

Two well-placed bombing attacks on return passage. No damage or casualties.

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Further to the success report from 1st E-boat Flotilla, 5 Army Corps informed me that the following message was intercepted from the beachhead.

- "1) 2 ammunition barges torpedoed, we are hoping to be able to save them.
- 2) 1 barge sunk, 1 still burning."

This confirms that the E-boat sank 2 ammunition barges which must have been lying at the landing stages they torpedoed.

From 2100 the 3 groups of Italian E-boats were in the area between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas. The first group between Ilokopas and Chugovkopas did not see any enemy shipping or patrol activity until about 1 hour before dawn. The second group northwest of Cape Ilokopas sighted 3 enemy M.T.B.'s proceeding to their operational area and about the same latitude as Ghelenjik. No engagement. At 0130 this group shelled the coast. No defensive activity apart from searchlights. The boats were off the coast until 0230. No enemy traffic observed. The third group southeast of Ghelenjik met with defensive fire from coastal artillery. They were also machine-gunned and bombed by a plane no casualties. They sighted 1 small enemy vessel putting into Ghelenjik. At 0230 they began return passage to Anapa.

Weather forecast (0930) North Caucasus coast:

SW winds, force 5, increasing to 6 at times, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

1330 I discussed tonight's operations with the flotilla commander in the light of the experiences gained last night. In the main, the disposition will remain as before, as the full impact of the operation must be concentrated directly against the landing points. For this reason we rejected the idea of placing the boats further apart. Similarly we dropped the proposal to have some boats further out at sea to draw off the enemy air defenses, as all available forces must be massed together for the main task of interfering with enemy supplies to the beachhead. The boat's best chance of success is in an operation with all available forces close together in a limited space. This arrangement allows for mutual support in the many engagements with enemy forces equipped with superior armament.

I therefore decided that the three flotillas should repeat their operations tonight in unchanged form.

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During the inspection of Anapa harbor the following facts were discovered:

- 1) There are berths for the Italian E-Boats alongside the mole, so long as the supply traffic to Anapa is stopped. But with the repeated air attacks with strong forces on recent nights the mole, which is obviously their main target, is dangerous. We cannot take the responsibility of having the Italian E-boats tie up there at night. Thus orders have been given that if there are no vacant berths at the buoys the Italian E-boats which are not out on operations are with two exceptions to make fast to the stern of the motor minesweepers and E-boats.
- 2) The E-boats and motor minesweepers tie up at buoys north of the mole. These berths are completely unprotected against torpedo attacks by submarines, K.T.B.'s (during the night) and planes. Hence a torpedo net barrage is urgently required.
- 3) Anapa Bay and the mole do not offer any protection against northerly winds. In spite of the good weather today, the boats were pitching and tossing at their buoys so violently that the crews could not get any rest after their night operations. Although the danger of enemy attack to which the boats are exposed in the open bay would make it advisable to keep them constantly at readiness to proceed, I find myself compelled to give orders that in turn some members of the crew are to sleep ashore so that they can get some rest. Otherwise they will not be able to stand up to the strain of the continuous operations which must be expected for some time.
- 4) Although in accordance with my request 2 heavy anti-aircraft batteries were transferred to Anapa and fighters held in readiness at the airfield, the harbor was heavily bombed during recent nights. The massing of the boats in the harbor thus entails considerable danger. For this reason I shall give a separate decision on each occasion when the boats are not out on operations as to whether or not they are to return to their own bases.

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- 1700 Wind freshened strongly Meteorological Station Simferopol gave warning of winds mainly SW, force 7. I have provisionally canceled my operational orders for the Italian E-boats.
- 1730 Commander, 1st-Boat Flotilla put out with one boat on meteorological reconnaissance; on his return he reported weather at sea as wind force 7, rough sea, swell, but possible for the boats to use their weapons.

Thus there can be no operations by the motor minesweepers and E-boats. For the time being the boats will remain at immediate readiness, as according to my experience it sometimes happens that the winds suddenly decrease towards evening.

- 1930 No improvement in the weather. Warning of a storm if the winds are W or NW. The boats lying at the buoys in the roads are working a great deal. If the winds changes, they are almost unprotected. For this reason and to counter the danger from possible enemy attacks during the night, I have given orders that the boats are to remain to Ivan Bala. Flotilla Commander reports that the passage can be done so long as they are not required to use their armament. With the weather as it is, it is already too late for the Italian E-boats to put out for the west after they have gone, the weather bound E-boats will have more room in harbor.

- 2255 1st E-boat flotilla put in to Ivan Bala.

... via the southern route for her prescribed operational area between Gauri and Cape Kador.

Supply Traffic:

a) Tenriuk Convoys:

... convoy No. 5 comprising "Hilfheit" "Baden 16" 1 lighter and 6 naval ferry barges led by motor-minesweeper R 30 put in to Tenriuk at 0430.

- 0330 Bomber attack on the convoy.

32 bombs were dropped from about 3,000 meters. No damage.

- 1700 The vessels left Kerch again after unloading.

Anna Convoys:

No convoys ran today as the harbor is required for operational forces.

Army Group A and 1st Air Bases have requested their resumption of operations against the beachhead are using up a great deal of fuel and ammunition.

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For this reason I have given orders that on 19 April 3 naval ferry barges will leave Kerch for Anapa. It is too late for an early convoy tomorrow, as it would have had to leave Kerch this evening. From 20 April I plan to resume on increased quota of Anapa traffic (7 naval ferry barges daily).

Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Traffic ran without incident and according to plan. There were 9 naval ferry barges used on 11 crossings, also 10 lighters which were partly used for loading and discharge of cargo.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

FZ-groups and 2 minesweeping planes swept the Pavlovski - Takil route. No mines swept.

Naval Special Duties Detachment sent in a request for the allocation of motor minesweeper R 165 as additional protection for the return "Suceava" and "Varna" convoy with destroyer "Maria", 3 motor minesweepers and motor minesweeper BR 7. The reason is that the Rumanian destroyers "Periwand" and "Izvesti" intended as protection for this convoy have been reported by the Rumanian Naval Command as non-operational on account of overstrain on the crews.

I cannot grant the request, as it is impossible to withdraw motor minesweeper R 165 from operations against the supply traffic to the beachhead.

Commander, Naval Special Duties Detachment has been given orders to proceed with the Naval Ferry Barges lying in Sevastopol to Cape Tarkhankutzki to meet the convoy (steamer "Ardeal") protected by the above-mentioned forces which is due to put in to Sevastopol about noon on 19 April. We will thus have additional protection on the particularly dangerous stretch after daylight.

Enemy Air Activity:

During the night of 17/18 April, 36 bombs were dropped on Anapa and 8 on Tenriuk. No damage to naval property. The main target in Anapa was the airfield, but the harbor area was also visited.

The enemy shelled and dropped bombs on Eivorossisk harbor sites, the southern sector and the southern part of the Vonen. Bombs were dropped near billets of naval Port Commander, no casualties. Two hits on House 23, no casualties.

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Sinfernopol Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea in visibility of between 40 and 100 km. did not discover any enemy shipping traffic. In the Bukhara sea area at 1235 there were 1 mine-

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sweeper and 3 motor minesweepers, course northwest; and in the Ghelenjik area 2 M.T.B.s, course southeast. At 1500, 1 M.T.B. between Kabardinka and Ghelenjik. Partial reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Batum in poor visibility. From Ghelenjik to Ochenchiri no real changes. Only partial view of Poti and Batum (oblique view). Heavy ships and 5 destroyers at their bases.

Night reconnaissance between Sochi and Ghelenjik up to 100 km. out to sea did not locate any enemy ships. Lively shipping traffic at the beachhead. At 1800 Naval Port Commander, Kavorossisk reported 1 destroyer putting out from Ghelenjik at 2000. The reconnaissance plane sighted 2 ships proceeding at high speed, course north, south of Myshako. At 2100 south of beachhead 10 boats, apparently motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s were engaged in action. One boat was on fire. At 2150 4 large ships tied up at the landing stages. At 2226 20 miles south of the beachhead 2 M.T.B.s, course 120°, were proceeding at high speed. At 2230 7 boats were making for the beachhead; 1 boat on fire, lying stationary.

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In the evening, Main Naval D/F Station reported 1 destroyer off the central to eastern parts of the east coast (not confirmed by night reconnaissance). Lively activity of small craft in the same sea area.

Submarines located: 4 in the central to western Black Sea and 4 in the sea area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast (0930):

Yalta-Kerch: NW winds, force 5, later backing to the west, calm, good visibility.

Novorossisk: S winds, force 4, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

Operation "Neptune":

Off Anapa the wind did not change to NW overnight, but remained SW so that the weather in the harbor was quiet. However there were night air attacks which fully justified our policy of reducing the amount of shipping in the harbor.

1230 I issued the following orders:

- 1) During the night of 19/20 April, all flotillas will repeat their operations as on the night of 17/18 April, but the Italian E-boat Flotilla will have only 4 boats in the Ghelenjik/Cape Chugovkopas area, while 3 other boats will operate against enemy supply traffic southeast of Tuapse.

I have divided the Italian E-boats into 2 groups because we are not keeping up the deception of a landing as practiced last night and 2 pairs of boats are sufficient for operations against supply traffic in the coastal strip between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas. With 3 boats stationed southeast of Tuapse we should have an opportunity to attack the traffic from the southern harbors making for Tuapse.

- 2) All flotillas will return to Anapa early on 20 April, except for some groups which may have to return to their bases at Ivan Bala or Theodosia to take in more torpedoes.

1545 1st E-boat Flotilla left Ivan Bala with 5 boats.

1730 Italian E-boat Flotilla left Anapa with 7 boats.

1900 Three motor minesweepers left Anapa for their operation.

One Italian E-boat had to remain behind in Anapa because of engine trouble.

At 1830 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a destroyer about 35 miles southwest of Ghelenjik. The naval forces at sea will be informed.

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1900 I arrived in Abrau (near Myshako) at the operational headquarters of General Wetzel, Commanding General, 5th Army Corps and General Korten, Commanding General, 1st Air Corps.

I informed the generals in command of the Army and Air Force units in action at the beachhead about the measures I have taken to tie down enemy supply traffic and my plans for operations by my flotillas. There were no demands for further measures.

During the conference I learned that our troops' attack met with heavy resistance and so far they have not been able to reach their daily objectives. Their greatest success is a wedge in the Russian front which extends in the form of a pocket behind Myshako mountain. If pushed further, it could lead to the isolation of this mountain and probably to the occupation of this commanding height.

Commanding General, 5th Army Corps thinks that the fighting will probably continue for a long time to come and I shall have to arrange for the operations of naval forces accordingly.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa convoys:

0430 Convoys were started again; 3 naval ferry barges (convoy No. 33) left Kerch with 160 tons of ammunition, 60 tons of fuel, 20 tons of bombs.

Orders were given for the resumption of more frequent Anapa convoys on 20 April. At 1630 Anapa convoy No. 34 sailed from Kerch with 3 naval ferry barges carrying ammunition and fuel. During the night the convoy will anchor off Cape Takil and continue the passage at dawn on 20 April.

In Anapa I received a request from 5th Army Corps that the empty naval ferry barges returning to Kerch should be released for the transport of casualties. The reason for the request is that the great numbers of wounded evacuated from the fighting at the beachhead cannot be removed by the few planes available and have to wait at the airfield without proper shelter or attention. In view of this situation, I have agreed that up to 20 slight casualties can be evacuated on each naval ferry barge, provided that there is sufficient rescue gear (apart from life-jackets, rubber linchies or rafts etc.)

b) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Traffic ran according to plan. Air raid on Kerch during the evening, but no damage to naval installations. 14 naval ferry barges were used in 15 crossings.

c) Kerch-Tenriuk G Convoys:

At 0530 the vessels of Tenriuk convoy No. 5 returned to Kerch.

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At 1800 tender "Grafenau", tugs "Daden" and "Braunkohle", towing vessel "Adelheid" led by motor minesweeper R 30 sailed from Kerch for Mariupol via Berdyansk. The tugs are to take over the 5 Boga barges lying in Mariupol to the Kuban where they will be used for the transport of supplies left there by Waterways Section 3.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

Four minesweeping planes operational at Kerch. Working in pairs they checked the swept channel in the northern and southern parts of Kerch Strait. No mines discovered. The FZ-groups searched the route in the southern part of Kerch Strait. No mines swept.

Enemy Air Activity:

Between 1945 and 2325 bombs were dropped on Temriuk. No damage. Between 2000 and 0300 44 bombs were dropped on the airfield and town area at Anapa. Buildings damaged. At 0120 4 bombs were dropped on Taman. No damage to naval property. Situation at Novorossisk unchanged. Usual exchanges of gunfire.

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Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

In the southeastern Black Sea in varying visibility no enemy ships were sighted. The Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Batum were reconnoitered. Usual shipping in the harbors. All heavy ships at their bases.

Night reconnaissance discovered lively traffic of small boats in the sea area off Novorossisk.

At 1130 Main Naval D/F Station located 1 submarine 22 miles south of Bugaz and 1 submarine 45 miles south of Sulina. Off the northern to central parts of the east coast movement of small craft continued. According to the radio picture there were no large surface vessels at sea. Submarines were detected: 3 in the central to western Black Sea, 2 in the southeastern Black Sea and 3 in the sea area off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Operation "Neptune":

0445 The motor minesweepers put in to Anapa. At 2225 they fired at the landing stage at Myshako and destroyed an ammunition carrier for certain. At landing stage 3, a fire broke out and lasted for an hour and a half with a heavy explosion at 2343. During the night there were four spells of firing on the landing stages. There were three engagements with enemy M.T.B.s (2 M.T.B.s on each occasion). We had no damage or casualties.

The enemy had placed 2 M.T.B.s out at sea, apparently with the intention of diverting our forces from the supply traffic and the landing stages.

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Flotilla Commander reported increased defensive fire from shore batteries. A new 4 cm. battery near Myshako took part in the firing, also a 7 cm. battery near Kabardinka.

0400 1st E-boat Flotilla returned with 5 boats to Anapa. Last night they also noticed increased patrol activity by small craft, submarine chasers and M.T.B.s effectively supported by searchlights and coastal batteries.

There were several engagements with enemy gunboats, submarine chasers and M.T.B.s and hits were scored. We had no damage or casualties. Apart from patrol activity no supply traffic, coastal vessels or boats were observed between Cape Doob and Ghelenjik.

At 0230 our boats fired 5 torpedoes at the landing points from Myshako to Suchuk and shelled the coast. Exact effect could not be observed because of the increased defensive fire from the new shore batteries. The attack was made more difficult because of the bright moonlight which enabled the enemy to use their superior artillery at great range.

0400 Italian E-boats again tied up in Anapa. After entering the operational area, the boats searched the coastal route between Ghelenjik and Cape Idokopas. They took up a lurking position on several occasions, but did not meet any shipping traffic.

About 10 miles southeast of Turpse the boats engaged 2 enemy gunboats. Hits on enemy vessels not observed, Italian E-boats undamaged.

Two boats took up a waiting position southeast of Cape Idokopas. Nothing sighted. Owing to a deterioration in the weather with NW winds and increasing sea, the operation was broken off. Heavy air raids on Anapa again during the night, altogether 20 penetrations and 68 bombs dropped.

One Italian E-boat which had remained in harbor because of engine trouble had a direct hit from a small bomb. The deck was pierced, bombs in boat exploded, several leaks in her side. She ran aground and was flooded. We are trying to repair the leaks and tow her to Theodosia.

Weather forecast (1000):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts: S-SW winds, force 4-2, fair, no cloud, visibility up to 10 miles.

1600 Conference with Flotilla Commanders in Anapa:

I informed the Flotilla Commanders about the situation on land front which will demand operations against traffic

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to the beachhead for a long time to come.

This will mean that I shall have to divide up the forces to allow for rest nights. After two nights on operations 1st E-boat Flotilla and the motor minesweepers are to have one rest night; half of the Italian E-boats will rest while the other half goes on operations. As 1st E-boat Flotilla has made successful torpedo attacks even on lighters which are used a great deal in enemy supply traffic, I have decided that on the nights when 1st E-boat Flotilla is resting one E-boat will reinforce the motor minesweeper group.

As a result of this decision in the normal course of events on the night of 20/21 April, 3 motor minesweepers will be on operations between Myshako and Cape Suchuk, 1st E-boat Flotilla between Cape Suchuk and Ghelenjik and 3 Italian E-boats between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas. During the night of 21/22 April, 4 E-boats will be operating between Myshako and Cape Doob and 3 Italian E-boats between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas; during the night of 22/23 April, 3 motor minesweepers and 1 E-boat between Myshako and Cape Doob and 3 Italian E-boats between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas.

The flotilla commanders have been ordered to repeat their operations of the night of 19/20 April tonight, the only difference being that the 3 Italian E-boats will not take up position southeast of Tuapse.

0128 While on passage from Sevastopol to Constantza escorted by destroyer "Maria", 2 motor minesweepers and motor minesweeper MR 7, steamer "Suceava" was hit by 2 torpedoes in hatch No. 2 and the engine room and sank. Submarine and torpedo track not sighted. The attack took place in bright moonlight in calm weather, so presumably was an underwater attack. Motor minesweeper R 164 lying stopped and listening with revolving directional hydrophones at the place of the attack heard submarine noises. "Suceava" sank three or four minutes after she was torpedoed. 71 men were rescued by the motor minesweepers and MR 7. 26 are missing, including Captain Feddersen, Commander, Sea Transportation Office, Black Sea and the captain of "Suceava".

Three seaplanes carried out a search during the forenoon without result. A patch of oil and floating pieces of gear were sighted in air grid square 1518. Why the naval forces did not keep up their search for survivors until dawn remains to be seen.

The torpedoing of a steamer of more than 7,000 G.R.T. entailing the loss of about a quarter of our Black Sea freighter tonnage is a new indication of the extraordinary submarine danger in the Black Sea. Agents' messages and prisoners' statements agree that in spite of several losses the enemy still has between 30 and 40 boats at his disposal.

The anti-submarine forces at my disposal are in no way adequate to meet the submarine menace. For a long time I have been sending in repeated requests for submarine

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chasers equipped with all kinds of gear, but there has been no response so far. "Ship 19" and "Xanten" are the only vessels equipped with search gear which could be used as submarine chasers. For reasons unexplained there have been repeated postponements of the preparation of the armed motor fishing vessels, of which 12 were to be equipped as submarine chasers. The resultant disadvantage for anti-submarine operations cannot be over-rated.

In view of the total number of escort forces available, the escort which Commander, Convoys and Escorts provided for "Suceava" which was returning empty from Sevastopol to Constantza - 1 destroyer ahead, 1 motor minesweeper to port and starboard and motor minesweeper MR 7 astern - must be regarded as adequate.

The moonlight and the calm weather favored the enemy attack.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa Convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 34 put in at 0745 and convoy No. 35 at 1020 without incident. After unloading, the 7 naval ferry barges began their return passage to Kerch where they put in at 1700 and 1845.

b) Kerch-Temriuk convoys:

At 1730 Temriuk convoy No. 6 left Kerch with towing vessel "Engerau", 1 lighter, 4 naval ferry barges and 1 naval ferry barge (hospital) carrying 1,800 tons of supplies.

c) Genichesk-Temriuk convoys:

At 0430 3 naval ferry barges sailed from Kerch to Genichesk as Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 1 and at 1300 3 naval ferry barges, 1 tug, 1 lighter sailed as convoy No. 2.

At 1745 the first naval ferry barges put in without incident. Supply traffic on the Genichesk-Temriuk route will be started on 21 April.

Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

13 naval ferry barges and lighters proceeded according to plan. Weather was calm and conditions in the Strait were good.

In the evening bombs were dropped on Kerch. No damage to naval installations or vessels.

d) Timber transports:

Two naval ferry barges carrying 160 tons of wood sailed at

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0530 via Yalta to Theodosia.

Minesweeping Activity.

Minesweeping planes checked the central and northern parts of Kerch Strait. No mines swept.

The group of motor minesweepers (RA) and the gear arrived in Kerch today. These should be of real assistance for minesweeping in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.

Usual gunfire at Novorossisk with bombardment of sites at the west harbor and fire from multiple-firing rocket guns on the southern sector and the southern part of the town.

E-boats S 49 and S 50 were ceremonially commissioned in Constantza.

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Daylight reconnaissance carried out in good visibility concentrating on the southeastern Black Sea did not sight any enemy shipping traffic. Three coastal vessels were lying stopped in the sea area off Ghelenjik. The Caucasus coast was examined as far as Ochmchiri and partially photographed. Usual shipping in the harbors.

Tuapse (aerial photograph): 1 minesweeper, 2 motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s, 3 freighters totaling about 2,800 G.R.T., 12 coastal vessels totaling about 2,500 G.R.T., 1 floating crane and 20 boats. Boom was raised.

Ochmchiri (aerial photograph): 2 motor minesweepers, 2 submarines, 1 coastal vessel, 1 freighter of 2,000 G.R.T., 1 freighter of 1,000 G.R.T. and 10 boats.

Sukhum (aerial photograph): 1 minesweeper, 2 M.T.B.s, 19 small coastal vessels and boats.

Ghelenjik (aerial photograph): 3 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s and 1 freighter of approximately 800 G.R.T., apparently beached.

Yeisk (aerial photograph): 3 motor minesweepers, 3 boats (20-30 meters in length) and about 20 small boats (fishing and rowing boats).

At 2000 Lichtenstein planes sighted a convoy 10 km. to the southeast consisting of 1 torpedo boat, 3 minesweepers, 3 motor minesweepers and 2 merchant ships of 1,500 G.R.T. At 2120 the convoy put in to Tuapse. At 2245 2 freighters off the landing point were fired on by artillery. The vessels turned off.

At 2300 night reconnaissance planes sighted 7 boats south of the beachhead, 3 boats lying stopped off the coast and

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1 boat proceeding at high speed 2 km. south of the beach-head.

Between 2400 and 0100 6 vessels were observed proceeding in the direction of the beachhead. At 0115 night reconnaissance planes sighted a total of 15 boats and 1 probable motor minesweeper at the beachhead. Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk also reported 3 vessels at sea off the bridgehead. It is quite certain that some of our own boats and the wrecks lying on the routes off the bridgehead are included in these reports.

Main Naval D/F Station located 4 submarines in the western to central Black Sea, including the submarine reported yesterday 35 miles east-southeast of St. George. Between 0800 and 1000 the submarines received reconnaissance signals. Off the east coast in the morning there were 12 destroyers probably proceeding to the northwest and 1 submarine in an unknown position. Movements of small craft off the central and northern east coast continue.

1st Air Corps reported at 2300: 7 boats off the coast near the beachhead, 3 boats lying stationary, 2 proceeding course south, and 1 at high speed, course north.

Own Situation:

Operation "Neptune":

0445 The motor minesweepers returned to Anapa from their night operations. In their attack area 2 boats had 5 engagements with enemy gunboats which had greatly superior armament.

The landing stages near Myshako were again under fire on two occasions. Some small craft were observed at two jetties. Last night the boats again experienced increased defensive activity by naval forces working together with shore batteries. About 0500 the motor minesweepers sailed for Kamish Burun to rest. They tied up there about 0815.

0600 The Italian E-boats put in. No enemy traffic or patrol activity encountered in the attack area.

0615 1st E-boat Flotilla put in to their base at Ivan Baba to take in torpedoes.

On last night's operation between Cape Doob and Ghelenjik the flotilla several times attacked a convoy, consisting of 3 or 4 coastal craft, several gunboats and M.T.B.s S 72, S 28 and S 102 sank 3 coastal vessels, each about 250 G.R.T. Strong defense by coastal batteries and patrol vessels. In bright moonlight the boats were several times shelled by medium coastal batteries from a range of up to 6 km. and forced off.

Apart from the convoy which they attacked, no traffic was observed between Cape Doob and Ghelenjik. Shortly after

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Sailing from Anapa, S 47 had to be sent back to Ivan Baba because of engine trouble. I sent the following survey of the situation to Naval Group South:

- 1) Since the beginning of the attack on the Myshako beachhead, every night (except for 18/19 April when the weather was unsuitable) E-boats, Italian E-boats and motor minesweepers have been stationed in the prescribed attack area to tie down enemy supplies. According to an enemy message picked up by Group Wetzell, 1st E-Boat Flotilla sank 2 enemy ammunition barges off the Myshako landing stages during the night of 17/18 April.

During the night of 19/20 April, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla fired at and sank 1 coastal vessel carrying ammunition.

During the night of 20/21 April, 1st E-boat Flotilla torpedoed and sank 3 coastal vessels.

Apart from these sinkings, hits have been repeatedly observed on enemy vessels. The enemy landing stages have been torpedoed several times, causing further damage and losses to the enemy. Enemy vessels making for the beachhead have been frequently forced to turn off by our vessels. Since the beginning of our attack, the Italian E-boats stationed between Ghelenjik and Chugovkopas have not met any enemy traffic. 1st E-boat Flotilla and 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla have always observed only slight traffic between Ghelenjik and the beachhead. Reports from the Air Force (e.g. night of 19/20 April, 50 boats at the landing stage) are the result of faulty observation. We have not had any losses in the numerous engagements.

- 2) The attacks on enemy traffic running close to the coast were made more difficult by the bright moonlight, which permitted the enemy to use their coastal artillery at a range of up to 6 km, and favored the enemy patrols with their superior guns. Our forces were also impeded by the flares used by the Air Force to illuminate the enemy beachhead.
- 3) The enemy defenses are constantly being strengthened and our prospects of success are decreasing. In spite of this, I still intend to continue operations by light forces between Myshako and Ghelenjik concentrating on the area between Myshako and Cape Doob every night as long as the fight against the beachhead lasts and the weather is at all suitable. In spite of the danger of air and torpedo attacks, Anapa will remain the operational base so that the boats may still

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make the passage even with east winds. 1st E-boat Flotilla and 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will put in to Ivan Baba or Kanish Burun every third night to take in supplies and to rest. Five Italian E-boats will be on operations in the Ghelenjik/Cape Idokopas area every night. Their base will be Anapa."

Weather forecast (1000):

South of Kerch Strait: SW winds, force 6, in the afternoon veering W to NW and decreasing to 5; visibility 8 to 15 miles. Novorossisk: S winds, force 5, visibility about 5 miles.

1500 In accordance with my decisions of 20 April I have ordered:

- 1) During the night of 21/22 April, 1st E-boat Flotilla will operate with 4 boats between Cape Myshako and Ghelenjik concentrating on the area between Myshako and Cape Doob.
- 2) At the same time Italian E-boat Flotilla with half their operational boats will be between Ghelenjik and Cape Chugovkopas.

Execution of the operation in accordance with Admiral Black Sea Gkdos, Chfs. 122.

1600 1st E-boat Flotilla put out with 3 boats for the prescribed operation.

1732 Italian E-boat Flotilla reported that the boats could not put out because of the weather.

I gave orders that the boats were to remain at immediate readiness for the present so that they could put out immediately the wind dropped.

1916 Italian E-boat Flotilla reported that following an improvement in the weather 3 boats put out to sea.

Land Situation:

There were no large-scale attacks on the beachhead during 21 April.

Northwest of the Myshako stream the enemy make an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate our penetration in the Russian front during the afternoon. The heavy Russian air attacks on Anapa which have been recurring night after night and which have already led to the loss of one Italian E-boat and are primarily directed against the airfield and harbor mole have persuaded me to strengthen the light anti-aircraft defenses on the mole and on the eastern bank, if necessary at the expense of weakening the batteries west of the mole.

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Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Naval Port Commander, Anapa have been directed accordingly.

0940 Submarine attack on the harbor at Ivan Baba. Two torpedoes on an E-boat lying at the torpedo pier: 1 ground-runner, 1 torpedo caught in the protective torpedo net. The E-boats in the harbor left immediately on anti-submarine operations. No result.

The value of the protective torpedo nets, which can be fired into from outside, and hence the necessity for protecting the E-boat berths on the open roadstead at Anapa with anti-torpedo nets (see War Diary 22 April) have been underlined by this attack.

Although a third heavy battery has been moved to Sevastopol for protection against enemy air raids, in view of the importance of this wide harbor, its anti-aircraft defenses are still inadequate. Another factor is that should the Air Force alter the focal point of their operations, they will move the batteries at short notice to give protection to their own installations.- primarily airfields. I consider that the Navy should take over the air defense of this important harbor which is sometimes very full of shipping and have sent in a request for:

- 1) 2 Naval Anti-Aircraft Detachments
- 2) 1 Naval Air Reporting Company with 3 radar sets.

Following the torpedoing of steamer "Succeava", Naval Group South has submitted a request for the equipment of the supply ships with search gear.

Although it would mean that they would be lost to supply traffic for the period when the gear was being installed I would greatly welcome the equipment of our few valuable steamers with submarine location gear.

Enemy Air Activity:

Heavy air raids on Anapa again last night. 67 heavy bombs were dropped, also light bombs and incendiaries.

Several air raids on Terriuk; no real damage at either place.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa Convoys:

Anapa convoys Nos. 36 and 37 ran today without incident with a total of 7 naval ferry barges.

At 1630 3 naval ferry barges (Anapa convoy No. 36) sailed for the Tekil anchorage. They will resume passage early on 22 April.

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b) Genichesk-Tenriuk convoys:

At 1000 3 naval ferry barges sailed from Genichesk as Tenriuk Convoy No. 1.

c) Kerch-Tenriuk convoys:

At 1820 3 naval ferry barges sailed as Kerch-Tenriuk Convoy No. 7.

At 1800 5 naval ferry barges and 1 tug with lighters began return passage from Tenriuk to Kerch.

d) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Convoys proceeded according to plan without enemy interference.

The following were carried during the period 11-20 April:

14,357 (247 troops, 594 (3) trucks, 10 trailers, 167 (2) horse-drawn vehicles, 18 tractors, 18 field kitchens, 26 guns, 68 machine-guns, 16 searchlights with power units, 18,758 tons (7,132 tons) military supplies, 4,729 (780) tons building and construction material, 538 horses and 112 (42) tons field mail.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

The FZ-group, minesweeping planes and Harbor Defense Flotilla Kerch checked the central and northern parts of the Kerch Strait. No mines swept.

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Sinferopol Heavy Situation:

At 0415 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 4 vessels proceeding from the landing area to Ghelenjik. At 0425 1 M.T.B course west, was making for Ghelenjik.

At 0626 daylight reconnaissance planes reported ground fog between Ghelenjik and Adler. No reconnaissance possible. No shipping traffic was observed in the southeastern Black Sea in visibility of 30-40 km. Only the usual boats off the Turkish coast.

The Caucasus coast and harbors were examined as far as Poti. Usual shipping in the harbors. Tuapse at 1536: 1 merchant ship of 1,000 G.R.T., 1 merchant ship of 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels and several boats; 1 merchant ship of 800 G.R.T. and 2 patrol vessels, course southeast, moderate speed, putting out.

Ghelenjik at 1556: 1 merchant ship of 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels, 3 motor minesweepers, 1 M.T.B. and about 50

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boats.

Night reconnaissance with Lichtenstein planes from Novorossisk to Sochi. The Freighter which sailed in the afternoon was located in the Sochi area.

From radio traffic Main Naval D/F Station detected only slight activity of small craft in the east coast area. Four submarines were located in the central to western Black Sea, 1 in the sea area south coast Crimea and 1 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

Operation "Neptune":

Last night 3 boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla were standing between Myshako and Cape Doob from about 2030 until an hour before dawn. Until 2200 there was thick fog in the operational area, then clear visibility (full moon).

Until midnight the boats shelled the coastal landing points. At 0018 2 torpedoes were fired at the landing stage, probably torpedoing a lighter.

Enemy gunboats and M.T.B.s again patrolled the sea area last night.

0600 The flotilla put in to Ivan Baba.

W.P. in accordance with their orders, 3 boats of Italian E-boat Flotilla took up a waiting position close to the coast off Cape Idokopas. In spite of good visibility, no shipping traffic or patrol activity was observed under the coast or in coastal waters.

The boats put in to Anapa about 0600.

With NE winds up to force 7, the boats had considerable difficulty in putting in to Anapa. In such weather it was not possible for the boats to anchor in Anapa roads. As the experiences of the previous night had shown that to berth 7 Italian E-boats at the little mole was an unwarrantable risk, the Flotilla Commander decided to proceed with the operational boats to Theodosia. Another factor influencing his decision was that several of the boats required engine repairs which could only be carried out at the base.

As the air raids of the previous night had broken down telephone communications, it was impossible to get the approval of Admiral, Black Sea.

Under the circumstances I approve the decision.

The boats put in to Theodosia about 1700.

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The operational Italian E-boats lying in Anapa which were not out last night anchored in the roads about one mile to the north of Anapa because of the danger of air attack at the mole.

At 0045 2 enemy M.T.B.s attacked. A torpedo glanced the rudder of Italian E-boat MAS 566 and grounded without detonating. The Italian E-boats went out to attack the enemy and scored several hits with their 2 cm. guns, but the enemy M.T.B.s made off out to sea at high speed and evaded further pursuit.

As there can be no operations by the Italian E-boats tonight (they were compelled by the weather to return to Theodosia) and since after their two nights' operations 1st E-boat Flotilla will have to rest tonight, I have only 3 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 1 boat from 1st E-boat Flotilla available for operations on the night of 22/23 April. These 4 boats will be concentrating their operations against supply traffic to the beachhead i.e. off the landing stages and on the approach route between Cape Doob and Myshako. Increased enemy patrol activity - sometimes by superior forces - and increasing coastal gunfire are however making operations in this area more and more difficult.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to be in the operational area between Myshako and Cape Doob one hour after dusk, returning to Anapa one hour before dawn.

1430 The motor Minesweepers left Kamish Burun for their operation, while E-boat S 72 sailed from Ivan Baba at 1320. They will rendezvous south of Cape Takil.

The situation at the beachhead has remained unchanged during the last 24 hours. Our attack has not advanced any further, but enemy counter-attacks were repulsed. Last night the Russian Air Force bombed and machine-gunned the beachhead and Anapa without ceasing. 81 heavy bombs were dropped on Anapa alone, the main targets being the airfield and the area round the harbor mole. The town area near the harbor is almost completely destroyed. The men belonging to Naval Port Command spend their nights in bunkers which afford some protection against direct hits by light bombs. A great number of bombs fell into the water immediately off the mole. A point to be noted is that the air attacks are always at night, as the fighters which were transferred to Anapa prevent day attacks. When the fighters are moved again, which will certainly happen when the fighting at the beachhead is over, even if the heavy anti-aircraft guns are left there, Anapa will also be attacked by day if the Russians discover that there are worthwhile targets there. I shall have to bear this fact in mind if Anapa is to be used as an operational base for light forces.

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I am continually reminding 1st Air Corps of the need for active air protection for Anapa.

Weather forecast (1000):

Crimea and north Caucasus coasts: E winds, force 5, fair, visibility over 10 miles.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 38 (3 naval ferry barges) and Anapa convoy No. 39 (3 naval ferry barges) ran according to plan. The boats returned to Kerch without incident at 1935.

The naval ferry barge from Anapa convoy No. 38 grounded near Takil on the evening of 21 April. She was towed off today and put in to Kerch without any major damage.

At 1700 Anapa convoy No. 40 sailed from Kerch with 3 naval ferry barges for the anchorage off Cape Takil.

b) Genichesk-Tenriuk convoys:

Convoy No. 1 put in to Tenriuk with 3 naval ferry barges at 0700 according to plan.

At 1015 3 naval ferry barges and tug "Amstel" with lighter "Olympia" left Genichesk as convoy No. 2.

c) Kerch-Tenriuk convoys:

The vessels of Kerch-Tenriuk convoy No. 7 returned to Kerch today at 1800 without incident.

d) Timber transports:

Two naval ferry barges carrying 160 tons of wood arrived at Kerch.

Freight towing vessel "Adelheid", "Grafenau" and tug "Baden 16" with 5 lighters put in to Berdyansk from Mariupol at 0415. They will go on to Tenriuk, led by motor minesweeper R 30, if the weather improves, as the "Bega" barges cannot stand up to rough weather.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

Four motor Minesweepers (RA) have checked a new route between Cape Takil and Zhelezni Rog in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. No mines were swept. The check was necessary, as we intend to lay 2 more minefields to strengthen the minefields in the southern entrance to

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Kerch Strait. The limit of the declared area and also the route from Cape Takil to the east will have to be moved further south.

The FZ-group was checking the supply routes in the central part of Kerch Strait, while in the northern part the minesweeping planes were looking for ground mines. No mines swept.

The approach course to Genichesk was checked by the Harbor Defense Flotilla. No mines discovered.

The overhaul of the Italian midget submarines in Constantza will be completed within the next few days. At the moment the commanders and some of the crews are absent. When they arrive, the boats will have an exercise period of from 2-3 weeks and will then be ready for operations.

I reported my plans to Group South as follows:

- "1) In the previous operational period - summer 1942 - the Italian midget submarines operated from Yalta off the southern Crimea, their main base remaining at Constantza. Experiences during this period show that, with the limited endurance and seaworthiness of these boats, the passage from Constantza to Yalta alone entails considerable difficulties due to the weather and engine troubles. For these reasons it was seldom that they were able to keep to the planned cycle of preparation in Constantza, transfer to Yalta, 2-3 operations off the southern Crimea, return passage and overhaul in Constantza. The operational capacity of the boats was thus considerably reduced. It was not possible to transfer their base to the Crimea before the autumn as there were no docks or slips available and there was not a sufficiently powerful crane even after the capture of Sevastopol.
- 2) In the light of these experiences Admiral, Black Sea has the following plans for the summer of 1943:
 - a) When all 5 boats are ready, they and their whole base equipment - workshops, compressors, power units and base personnel - will be moved to Sevastopol.
 - b) The midget submarines will be used defensively for anti-submarine operations and stationary protection for the convoy routes off the south and west coasts of the Crimea.
Re a): The Italian base has its own personnel

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and technical equipment and can work independent of German assistance in Sevastopol. The crews and base personnel including the Italian technicians (altogether 70-75 people) can be accommodated in the building up to now used by the Italian E-boat crews on the south bank of the north bay at Sevastopol. If assistance is needed for special jobs, it can be provided by Naval Fitting-Out Depot, Sevastopol. A 40-ton floating crane for raising the boats for underwater repairs is available. Preliminary orders have been issued to the stations concerned.

Re b) The characteristics of the Italian midget submarines (seaworthiness, limited radius of action, crew of four without relief) only permit operations for defensive purposes near to the bases. In the present situation they can most profitably be used off the Crimean coast, concentrating off Eupatoria, Cape Sarich and Theodosia:

aa) for operations at these points against the enemy submarines constantly attacking our convoys on the supply routes
bb) for patrolling the coastal waters, perhaps also the southern entrance to Kerch Strait, against attacks by enemy surface vessels.

- 3) In view of possible changes in political situation in the Black Sea area (Turkey), the auxiliary base already prepared at Burgas last year will be kept in readiness. Thus there can be a quick transfer there for the purpose of offensive operations off the Bosphorus.
- 4) The measures taken and plans reported by Admiral, Black Sea have been discussed with Captain Mimbelli of Italian Naval Command, Black Sea and are in accordance with Italian views."

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Daylight reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea did not see anything of the enemy. The Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Poti were examined, but it was not possible to examine Batum because of ground fog and fighter defenses.

At 0700 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported a submarine 45 miles west of Cape Tarkhankutzki. A Rumanian reconnaissance plane reported the same submarine at 0730, course northeast. Only slight activity off the

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Caucasus coast: In the Tuapse Area 1 guardboat, off Adler 1 M.T.B. course northwest, off Gudauty 2 coastal vessels and 2 patrol vessels, course southeast, and off Ochenchiri 1 towed convoy, course northwest.

Ghelenjik: 7 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 G.R.T., 2 motor minesweepers, 1 torpedo boat and several boats.

Ochenchiri: 2 submarine tenders, 2 coastal vessels totaling 600 G.R.T., and 6 submarines.

Poti (aerial photograph): The battleship, a heavy cruiser in dock, 2 cruiser hulls, 3 destroyers, 2 minesweepers, 5 motor minesweepers, 11 M.T.B.s, 8 submarines, 1 torpedo boat, 1 passenger ship of 8,500 G.R.T., merchant shipping totaling 27,500 G.R.T., 1 paddle-steamer and 12 coastal vessels totaling 6,000 G.R.T. No damage to the ships was seen following the air raid on Poti carried out in unfavorable weather on the night of 22/23 April.

Azov harbors: A part from the usual fishing vessels, there were 6 small armed vessels in Yeisk, 3 of them of the motor minesweeper type.

1298S Night reconnaissance observed several motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s in action off Novorossisk. The Caucasus coast and the southeastern Black Sea were not examined. No 14000M locations in the central Black Sea.

Phenosis Main Naval D/F Station Detected 1 destroyer off the central 1-284- part of the east coast and 1 off the southern part during 984 the evening.

82201 Mot.No. Increasing activity of small craft off the central part in both directions. Four submarines were detected in the central to western Black Sea and 1 off the south Crimean coast.

Operation "Neptune"

0500 The motor minesweeper group and E-boat S 72 returned from their operation.

From about 2100 to 0130 in more favorable moon conditions the boats were standing 1.7-2.0 miles off the landing stages at Myshako which they shelled repeatedly. At their fifth run-in about 2315, a big fire broke out at landing stage 3; it went on burning for about 75 minutes, the cause was a hit on an ammunition dump. E-boat S 72 fired 2 torpedoes at the landing stage and gunboats. Result not observed. Some boats had 6 engagements with enemy M.T.B.s and gunboats. The deck of E-boat S 72 was damaged by 4 cm. shell hits. No casualties, boat operational. No convoy traffic was observed between the landing stages at Myshako and Ghelenjik. Slight traffic between Kabardinka and Ghelenjik.

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From 0200 to 0315 the boats took part in a search for one of our planes which fell into the sea west of Novorossisk. Nothing seen of her.

Weather forecast (1000):

South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts: NE winds, force 4, decreasing, fair to cloudless, visibility over 10 miles.

In the course of 23 April and during the night of 23/24 April there was no change in the situation at the beachhead. The enemy is trying to mop up our penetration. Their attacks were repulsed several times. Our troops did not make any more attacks and the Air Force did not repeat their heavy operations of the first few days. I requested Army Group A for information about whether the operation is to continue or not and was told that Army High Command has been requested for permission to discontinue operations, but so far no decision had been received.

This means that I must bear all my previous decisions in mind and send the naval forces out on operations tonight. I issued the following operational orders for the night of 23/24 April:

- 1) Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla with 3 boats between Myshako and Cape Suchuk.
- 2) Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla with 4 E-boats between Cape Suchuk and Ghelenjik.
- 3) Italian E-boat Flotilla with 3 boats between Ghelenjik and Chugovkopas.

All flotillas will leave their bases to reach the attack areas one hour after dark. They will commence return passage one hour before dawn:

- 1) 1st E-boat Flotilla with 3 boats to Anapa
- 2) Motor minesweepers to Kamish Burun
- 3) E-boat S. 72 to Ivan Baba
- 4) Italian E-boats to Anapa

The boats which return to Anapa will be out on operations again on the night of 24/25 April, the motor minesweepers and E-boat S 72 will rest on that night.

As the fighting at the beachhead is likely to go on for an indefinite period, we shall probably have to continue to evacuate wounded from Anapa for some time. I have now also received a request from the Army for the naval ferry barges to bring leave personnel from Anapa to Kerch, so I have issued the following regulations for such transports:

- 1) Maximum of 25 men per naval ferry barge. They must be either leave personnel or slight casualties

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who can make use of life-saving equipment without assistance.

- 2) Transportation only on naval ferry barges which will put in to Kerch on the same day.
- 3) Naval ferry barges used for such transportation must have sufficient life-saving equipment (rafts and dinghies as well as life-jackets).

I have had 3 naval ferry barges stationed in Sevastopol to provide additional protection for the Sevastopol convoys on the particularly dangerous stretch from Cape Tarkhankutzki to Sevastopol. As the naval ferry barges reduce the speed of the fast convoys and thereby increase the danger from submarines, I have given orders that in the case of fast convoys the naval ferry barges are to be stationed between Cape Tarkhankutzki and Cape Khersonese to give protection in relays. This will mean that the area is patrolled, making submarine attacks more difficult without reducing the speed of the convoys.

0910 While on passage from Theodosia to Yalta to take in wood, naval ferry barges F 301 and F 406 were attacked by a submerged enemy submarine off Cape Atlama. A fan-of-two was fired at F 301, range 600-800 meters. First torpedo missed astern, surface-runner; second torpedo missed ahead. Ten depth charges were dropped where the attack was made, but no success was observed.

The "Tisza" and "Theben" convoy, escorted by 2 naval ferry barges, was attacked by bombs off Aitodor while on passage from Yalta to Sevastopol. An enemy plane carried out 3 attacks from an altitude of 2,500 meters. 13 bombs were dropped, no hits. Slight splinter damage to the deck of "Tisza". Our defenses had no success as the plane remained out of range of our light anti-aircraft guns.

In the southern entrance to Kerch Strait a torpedo attack was made on naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 41 which was returning from Anapa to Kerch. Misfire aft on F 472. Estimated depth setting 2 meters. Three depth charges had no obvious result. The naval ferry barges continued passage to Kerch as they had to be there before dark because of the wounded on board.

The two attacks off the south coast of the Crimea again indicate increased enemy submarine activity. I have not sufficient anti-submarine forces available in this area, as the only vessels with adequate location gear - "Xanten" and "Ship 19" - must be used to protect the supply routes from Constantza to Sevastopol. These attacks, for which we have practically no countermeasures, again emphasize the urgency of my request for adequate and suitable submarine chasers. In spite of this acute submarine

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danger the convoys off the south Crimean coast and to Anapa must continue.

I have informed the naval forces of the appearance of submarines and ordered special watchfulness. 1st Air Corps will be requested to fly extra anti-submarine patrols off the south Crimean coast and to carry out anti-submarine operations.

According to air reconnaissance reports of recent weeks, the enemy has been making increased use of tugs with lighters in supply traffic off the Caucasus coast. On operations off Novorossisk, 1st E-boat Flotilla has repeatedly torpedoed lighters.

As on previous operations the U-boats have never used up their torpedoes on large targets, I have no hesitation in permitting them to use their torpedoes against lighters. U 9 and U 19 now at sea have received orders for torpedo operations against lighters and towing barges using the shallowest possible depth setting.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa convoys:

Apart from the submarine attack (see above), Anapa convoys Nos. 40 and 41 ran according to plan. Seven naval ferry barges returned to Kerch at 1545 and 1930. Three naval ferry barges sailed from Kerch at 1615 as Anapa convoy No. 42.

b) Genichesk-Temriuk convoys:

Three naval ferry barges with tug "Ansel" and lighter "Olympia" (convoy No. 2) put in to Temriuk at 0700 without incident.

c) Kerch-Temriuk convoys:

Convoy No. 8 sailed from Kerch at 1825 for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges, freight towing vessel "Engerau" and lighter "Evertje".

d) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Nine naval ferry barges, tugs and lighters operated. Ferry traffic was without incident, no interference from the enemy.

At 0515 "Grafenau", "Braunkohle 8", "Adelheid" and "Baden 16" handed over the 4 "Bega" barges brought from Mariupol to the River Tug and Waterways Section III at the Kuban estuary.

The "Bega" barge (60 years old) had to be left behind in

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Berdyansk because she was leaking. At 1650 the tugs put in to Kerch.

In my report to Naval Group South and Naval High Command, Operations Division, I have added the following note to the figures showing the quantity of goods carried during the second ten-day period in April, noted in the War Diary 21 April:

- "1) The Navy transports supplies to the Kuban Bridgehead mainly on routes which lie out to sea: Kerch-Anapa (60 miles), Kerch-Temriuk (55 miles), Yalta-Kerch-Taman (timber transports 130 miles) and since 21 April Genichesk-Temriuk (135 miles). In the supply traffic in Kerch Strait via the short and protected Yenikale-Kossa-Chushka (5 miles) route, only combined operations boats are used, while on the Kerch-Taman (15 miles) and Kerch-Senaya (25 miles) routes principally combined operations ferries operate.
- 2) Longer supply routes (Anapa-Temriuk) mean that less use is made of the shipping, but these are definitely of advantage for the Army, as supplies landed in Anapa are near the Novorossisk front and good roads, in Temriuk they can be brought to the Kuban and then forwarded under more favorable conditions. The longer route and the danger to the transports at sea are disadvantages which we have to accept, particularly as the capacity of the unloading stages at Taman and Senaya is not sufficient to handle the whole turn-round.
- 3) In judging the Navy's share in comparison with the total supply traffic, the length of the routes and other factors (weather conditions, enemy interference etc.) must be borne in mind."

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

The first group of motor minesweepers (M) swept the courses for the two projected minefields at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait with oropesa gear to a width of 400 meters. No mines swept.

The second group buoyed the route between Cape Fonar and Cape Kasantip (supply route to Genichesk).

Enemy Air Activity:

During the night of 22/23 April, bombs were dropped on Taman (12), Temriuk (26) and Anapa (37). Although damaging buildings in Anapa, the attacks did not cause any casualties or damage any naval property.

At 1615 3 enemy planes attacked Yalta: 9 bombs on the

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town area and 1 bomb on the quarters of the Naval Shore Commander. Only slight damage.

During the night of 22/23 April, 1st Air Corps attacked Poti harbor using about 70 planes. The weather was unfavorable and some of the planes did not find their target, while others had to break off the attack owing to engine trouble. The planes which reached Poti found that the harbor was fog-bound, so there could be no precision bombing.

Daylight reconnaissance did not detect any damage to the ships in Poti harbor. This attack was the fulfillment of a repeated request from Admiral, Black Sea for an air raid on the shipping lying massed in the comparatively small harbor at Poti. The opinion of Admiral, Black Sea that a surprise attack with strong air forces in extraordinarily favorable conditions would have good prospects of success is shared by 1st Air Corps. The lack of success must be put down to the unfavorable weather and fog. The expected heavy anti-aircraft defenses were not encountered.

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Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

At 0200 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 1 vessel proceeding from Doob to the landing point. (Landing area fog-bound). Further at 0430 5 vessels were sighted proceeding out to sea from the landing area.

Daylight reconnaissance did not sight anything of the enemy in the southeastern Black Sea. The Caucasus coast and harbors as far as Sukhum were examined. Ochenchiri to Batum not reconnoitered owing to the weather. In the area south of Tuapse a convoy of 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,000 G.R.T., was sighted, course northwest, leaving Tuapse and 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast. No shipping traffic in the remaining sea area.

As far as examined nothing unusual in the shipping in harbor.

Ghelenjik at 1131 (aerial photograph, partially obscure): 1 coastal vessel of 800 G.R.T. on the beach, 6 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 G.R.T., 9 motor minesweepers and about 50 boats.

Tuapse at 1114 (aerial photograph): 1 torpedo boat, 2 minesweepers, 9 motor minesweepers, 3 M.T.B.s, 1 freighter of 1,500 G.R.T., 1 freighter of 300 G.R.T., 3 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 G.R.T., and 20 boats.

Sochi at 1040 (aerial photograph): 4 motor minesweepers and 15 boats. No shipping in Adler or Gudauty.

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Sukhum at 1120 (aerial photograph): Apart from the usual shipping tied up there, 1 freighter of 1,000 G.R.T., 1 coastal vessel of 400 G.R.T. and 20 boats.

Night reconnaissance flown only over the Caucasus coast to Sochi and over the central Black Sea. Nothing seen of the enemy.

At 1040 Main Naval D/F Station reported 1 destroyer in the Adler-Sukhum area; she was located in the Adler-Tuapse area, course southeast, on the previous evening. Another destroyer was detected in the Adler-Tuapse area, course northeast. Usual movement of small craft during the day, increasing off the central and northern parts of the east coast in the evening. Two submarines were located in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Operation "Neptune":

0445 The boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla put in to Anapa from their operation near Myshako. While on passage to the operational area they were three times bombed by enemy planes. In the operational area they had 6 engagements with gunboats, M.T.B.s and patrol vessels protecting the enemy supply traffic between Ghelenjik and Myshako. One M.T.B. and 1 transport vessel of about 100 G.R.T. were set on fire. The M.T.B. sank a burning transport vessel dropped out of the convoy which made off to the southeast. Several hits were observed on another M.T.B. She sent up heavy smoke, hid herself in the smoke screen and disappeared from sight. Last night the three motor minesweepers fired 1091 rounds of 3, 7 cm. and 1150 rounds of 2 cm. ammunition.

From 2100 until 0300 1st E-boat Flotilla was in the Suchuk-Cape Doob area. They repeatedly attacked enemy patrol vessels, gunboats and M.T.B.s. They did not meet any ships or boats proceeding from Doob or Ghelenjik to Myshako. At 0445 3 boats of the flotilla put in to Anapa; E-boat S 72 was dismissed to Anapa.

Owing to a deterioration in the weather, the 3 Italian E-boats could not reach their prescribed operational area between Tuapse and Cape Idokopas. The boats had to seek the shelter of the Taman coast. Towards midnight more air raids: no damage or casualties.

Italian E-boats put in to Anapa at dawn.

Weather forecast (0930 Yalta-Novorossiisk): N-NE winds, force 4-3, mostly cloudless, visibility over 10 miles.

1200 Owing to the unusually heavy engagements last night, the guns aboard motor minesweeper R 36 are out of action. Repairs not possible in Kamish Burun.

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As I do not wish to weaken the group of motor minesweepers, I shall have to exchange R 36 for another motor minesweeper. At the moment R 163 which also has a 3, 7 cm. gun is at Sevastopol. She has been ordered to proceed immediately from Sevastopol to Kerch.

At the same time R 36 was ordered to proceed to Sevastopol to replace R 163. She will thus be available to Commander, Convoys and Escorts for escort duties. It is possible to exchange the 2 cm. guns in Sevastopol.

1200 No decision has yet been taken about whether to continue the Army operations at the beachhead. I shall thus have to continue operations against enemy supplies tonight.

The following orders were issued for the night of 24/25 April:

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- 1) 1st E-boat Flotilla will operate with 3 boats between Myshako and Cape Doob.
 - 2) Italian E-boat Flotilla will operate with 3 boats between Cape Doob and Ghelenjik. .
The times for entering and leaving the operational area will be the same as on previous nights.
After the completion of the operation, 1st E-boat Flotilla will return to Ivan Baba and the Italian E-boats to Theodosia.
- 1600 A message was received from Italian Naval Command, Theodosia that two of the Italian E-boats due to go out on operations tonight and at present lying in Anapa are non-operational owing to engine trouble and will have to return to Theodosia for repairs. Orders were given that the operation is to be carried out with the 3 boats which are operational in Theodosia. They are to return to Anapa early on 25 April. I intend to send these boats out on operations again on the night of 25/26 April. They will then use Anapa as their base.
- 2100 The Italian E-boats which sailed for their operation at 1800 returned to Theodosia, as they met bad weather off Cape Opuk and one of them had engine trouble.
- 2200 Army Group A informed me that the operations against the Russian beachhead south of Novorossisk are to be discontinued.
In spite of this radical change in the situation, one of the main duties of the operational forces, the weakening of the Russian supply traffic close to the Caucasus coast and to the beachhead, still remains. The operational orders for tonight will not therefore be altered.
The boats will return to Anapa tomorrow morning according to plan and will leave there for operations against supply traffic further south on the night of 25/26 April.
I shall also carry out operations directly against the beachhead from time to time, but I consider it advisable to break these off for some days to induce the enemy to cut down the patrol activity which has been constantly increasing during the last few days.
So far there have been no success reports from U 19 which has been in the Tuzpse/Cape Idokopas Area since 17 April engaged on operations complementary to operation "Neptune". When "Neptune" is over, the boat will be transferred to the operational area originally planned for her between Cape Uchdere and Gagri where there will be far better prospects of success.

Supply Traffic:

a) Anapa convoys:

Convoys Nos. 42 and 43 returned to Kerch at 1720 and 1930 respectively. Their passages were without incident. At 1700 convoy No. 44 sailed from Kerch for Anapa.

b) Genichesk-Tomriuk convoys:

Genichesk-Tomriuk convoy No. 3 sailed from Genichesk at 1700 with 3 naval ferry barges.

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c) Kerch-Temriuk convoys: At 0515 convoy No. 8 (see War Diary 23 April) put in to Temriuk according to plan.

Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

A combined operations ferry carrying pressed straw and ammunition caught fire at the north mole at Kerch. After unsuccessful attempts at extinguishing the fire, the ferry was towed away and sunk. Cause of the fire unknown. 20 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and 2 lighters were employed on 20 crossings. Ferry traffic was carried on without enemy interference.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait:

The FZ group checked the routes in the central part of Kerch Strait on both sides of the line of buoys with oropesa gear and noise box (turbines) five times. No mines swept. Two minesweeping planes checked the route from Cape Chroni to Cape Kasantip. Four ELM (I) mines were swept in 45°29'N, 25°53'E. Commander, Danube Flotilla has been ordered to sweep the route between Cape Chroni and Cape Kasantip (part of the supply route to Genichesk) with the skid gear which has meanwhile become available. As an immediate measure the route will be moved further north.

Enemy Air Activity:

At 1443 Yalta was again bombed. A large number of bombs was dropped - precise figures not available. The gasoline store of Harbor Defense Flotilla was hit and set alight; 35 barrels destroyed. Harbor defense boat RJ 01 was slightly damaged by bomb splinters. Five bombs fell directly in front of Naval Port Commander's quarters. The Naval Port Command H.Q. were damaged, but are still in use. Rather heavy material damage and 1 slight casualty. During the night of 23/24 April, the enemy repeated the attack on Anapa and dropped 44 heavy bombs, also a great number of light bombs and incendiaries. Only damage to buildings. 16 bombs were dropped on Taman shortly after midnight. No damage to Naval property.

After completion of engine repairs, E-boat S 26 returned to Ivan Baba at 0800.

With her return I have again 5 operational E-boats. Usual artillery fire and shelling by multiple-fire rocket guns on harbor sites and the southern sector.

No change on the front at the enemy beachhead. After very heavy preliminary artillery fire at 1700, the enemy again attacked our penetration with supporting bombers. There was heavy fighting, but the attacks were without success.

According to aerial photographs of the Azov harbors, the enemy has brought several small craft to Yeisk, probably by rail. Six of them seem to be motor minesweepers. There are also great number of fishing vessels (rowing boats) in Yeisk, Akhtari and the small fishing harbors on the east coast of the Sea of Azov.

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These vessels would not be able to carry out large-scale operations against our supply traffic which is mainly carried out by naval ferry barges with superior armament, nor could they be used for large-scale landing operations. Nevertheless these small armed vessels again appearing in the Sea of Azov must be destroyed and orders to this effect have been given by Group South. The aim is to prevent assemblies of enemy forces and to forestall attacks on our supply routes, harbors and coasts. According to the aerial photographs, the vessels are off the mole in Yeisk inner harbor.

I see the following possibilities for destroying them either in harbor or as they put out:

- 1) The motor minesweepers or naval ferry barges might shell them from the sea. Attack to be carried out immediately it is light (naval gunnery lighters which are to be transferred to the Sea of Azov will not be arriving before the beginning of May).
- 2) Minefield to be laid off the entrance to Yeisk harbor.
- 3) Bomb and machine-gun attacks by the Air Force.

Re 1) There is not much prospect of success from artillery bombardment of the boats in harbor, as owing to the depth of the water and the nature of the harbor installations the bombardment would have to be carried out at long range, so that the chances of hits on the boats lying at the mole are slight. Apart from this, before the evacuation of Yeisk harbor in 1942, the enemy laid numerous ELM(1) mines off Yeisk. Only the direct approach route was swept, so that a flotilla would not have a large mine-free area in which to develop an attack.

Re 2) Moored mines designed for use against small vessels (i.e. mines with shallow depth setting) cannot be laid in Taganrog Bay where the depth of the water varies by as much as 3 meters, as they would have to be laid too deep to be effective to avoid mines rising to the surface at low tide. Non-contact mines would not be effective against these small vessels which are mostly constructed of wood or aluminum.

Re 3) I think the best prospects of success would be found in a surprise air attack on Yeisk with strong air forces. I have therefore suggested to 1st Air Corps that planes should bomb and machine-gun the small vessels lying in Yeisk harbor as soon as possible.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Today's early reconnaissance did not discover any enemy vessels between Kerch Strait and Novorossisk. At 0845 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk located 3 enemy vessels between the landing point and Cape Doob.

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Daylight reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea reported 1 guardboat off Gudauty and one off Adler. Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast and the harbors from Ghelenjik to Ochemchiri did not reveal anything unusual in the shipping in the harbors. Ghelenjik: 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 G.R.T., 3 motor minesweepers, 2 M.T.B.s and 40 other boats. Tuapse: 1 torpedoboat, 2 minesweepers, 6 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s, 2 freighters of 1,500 G.R.T. and 800 G.R.T. respectively and 8 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 G.R.T.

Movement of shipping was observed in the following sea areas: Off Ghelenjik 1 towed convoy totaling 1,600 G.R.T. putting in to harbor; off Tuapse 1 M.T.B., course southeast; off Sochi 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast; off Adler, 1 motor minesweeper, course northwest; off Ochemchiri 2 M.T.B.s.

Night reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast from Novorossisk to Adler discovered 15 boats unloading at the landing area at 2230. Two ships were located 20 miles south of Tuapse. No enemy movements in the southeastern and central Black Sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported usual activity of small vessels. The destroyer reported on 24 April is probably still at sea. Two submarines were located in the central to western Black Sea and 3 off the east coast. Aerial photographic reconnaissance of the Azov harbors showed the following results: Fishery Protoka estuary: 30 boats (increase of 15). Fishery Tayka: 1 motor minesweeper and 56 boats (decrease of 41 boats compared with 23 April. Fishery Primorsko Akhtari: 1 motor minesweeper and 96 boats. Fishery Walfirovka: No boats. Fishery Kamyshevotka: 10 boats. Menpailenko: 5 boats. Yisk: 3 motor minesweepers, 1 small paddle-steamer, 3 coastal vessels and 12 boats.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast (0930): South Crimean and north Caucasus coasts: E winds, force 3, visibility above 10 miles, night temperature 8°-10° C.

- 0344 From the operational area U 19 reported no steamer traffic. On 23 April she attacked an enemy submarine chaser, depth setting 1.5 meters. The torpedo broke the surface. The enemy went on dropping depth charges for 7 hours, but caused no damage. Boat has 4 torpedoes left.
- 0800 Submarine attack off Cape Fcolent on Tug "Woywoda" on passage with lighter from Sevastopol to Yalta under escort by 2 naval ferry barges. One torpedo 50 meters astern of "Woywoda".
- 0620 Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla put in to Theodosia with 3 boats. From 2000 on the evening of 24 April until 0245 the boats were in the operational area off Myshako.

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At 2220 3 torpedoes were fired at the landing point: No vessels were observed there. It was therefore impossible for 15 boats to have unloaded there - see reconnaissance report from the Air Force. Several exchanges of fire between the boats and the coastal batteries and infantry positions near Myshako. The boats engaged 2 gunboats. Machine-gun hits on E-boat S 102, no casualties. Up to 2315 no traffic was observed, after that thick fog.

At 2250 after 3 flares had been fired the boats were bombed in air grid square 7545. The attack was repeated in thick fog at 0105. The Flotilla Commander's idea that the bombs may have been dropped by one of our own planes is confirmed as very probable by Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Air Corps, as the landing stages were subjected to constant attack by the Air Force on that night.

Following the decisions taken as the result of the completion of operation "Neptune" (see War Diary 24 April), Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla received the following orders at 1000:

- 1) During the night of 25/26 April, 1st E-boat Flotilla will be standing with 2 boats between Tuapse and Cape Uchdere. Task: To sink enemy supply ships, including smaller vessels, if necessary using guns.
- 2) On passage to the operational area torpedo operations against landing stages at Myshako, then proceed close to the coast. Sharp look-out for mines.
- 3) Boat will sail at a time which will enable them to torpedo the landing stages about 1 hour after dark.
- 4) The boats will leave the operational area 1 hour before dawn to put in to Ivan Baba.

At 1600 1st E-boat Flotilla reported that the boats had sailed in accordance with these instructions. I reported to Group South that the Army had abandoned operation "Neptune" and the naval operations against supplies to the enemy beachhead be discontinued in their present form.

3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and Italian E-boat Flotilla, which are not going out on operations on the night of 25/26 April, are to carry out minor repairs instead.

2005 Italian E-boat Flotilla received orders to proceed to Anapa with all operational boats on 26 April. As we have learned that the sea wind increases from about 1100, the boats are to arrange their time of sailing to reach Anapa about 1100. These will proceed from there to the operational area in the evening after the wind has dropped.

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Contrary to my suggestion that Yeisk should be the first target for our air attacks on the Sea of Azov, the reason being that the heaviest concentrations of shipping were observed there, 1st Air Corps made their first attack on Primorsko Akhtari. This change was necessary because the approach route to Yeisk from the present air base is too long for the accompanying fighters and therefore the fighters must first be moved to Mariupol. However the attack on Yeisk is to take place in the course of the next few days.

At 2154 1st Air Corps reported on the attack on Akhtari: heavy fires in the harbor and town of Akhtari. Impossible to observe the number of boats sunk, as the berths were hidden in smoke. In the roads 1 motor minesweeper was set on fire.

Enemy Air Activity:

On the night of 24/25 April, the enemy made several heavy air attacks on our harbors. In Taganrog the harbor area was plastered with bombs. The attack which was carried out in waves lasted 3-4 hours. Numerous heavy bombs (probably 250 and 500 kg.) were dropped from a great height on quays, railroad and docks. Three men killed, several slightly wounded. A great deal of damage to buildings. Motor fishing vessel No. 2800 was sunk by a bomb while other boats were damaged by splinters. Naval Port Commander, Taman reported a total of 45 bombs. No damage to naval property.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported from Temriuk that 25 heavy bombs including incendiaries were dropped in the course of the night. There were 19 flights over Anapa, but only 2 bombs were dropped. From Novorossisk Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Naval Port Commander reported usual activity. Enemy artillery bombarded the harbor sites, the southern sector and the town area. At 0300 heavy enemy artillery bombarded the southern sector from the Chelenjik direction.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov was continued. FZ-groups checked the route in Kerch Strait from point 5 to point 8. Minesweeping planes swept the Azov route from Cape Fonar to Cape Kasantip. No mines swept. Following the discovery of mines off Kasantip, motor minesweepers (RA) moved the line of buoys from point 17 off Cape Fonar to Cape Kasantip to the new route. Check sweeps with propesa gear on both sides of the new line of buoys were without result.

- 1250 The new FZ-group which was operating off Genichesk reported 1 mine swept 46°5.4'N 34°55.7'E on the first covering run.
On orders from Naval Special Transport Staff, until further notice the naval ferry barges from Genichesk to Temriuk will only run when accompanied by anti-mine escort.

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The FZ-groups laid 18 fairway buoys on the route from Genichesk as far as 45°57'N, 35°09.5'E.

Supply Traffic:

a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic:

Traffic proceeded according to plan and without interference from the enemy. No special incidents.

b) Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoys Nos. 44 and 45 ran as scheduled. Anapa convoy No. 46 left Kerch at 1700 with 3 naval ferry barges. Anapa convoy No. 42 which was proceeding east carried 83 tons of ammunition, 82 tons of fodder, 100 tons of fuel, 5 tons of mail and 4 men. Anapa convoy No 43 which was proceeding east carried 80 tons of ammunition, 165 tons of fodder and 3 tons of mail. On returning to the west, this convoy carried 1 ton of mail.

c) Genichesk-Temriuk convoys:

Convoy No. 3 put in to Temriuk at 0915 with 3 naval ferry barges. After unloading the boats left again for Genichesk at 1600 (F 139, 168 and 537).

Naval ferry barges F 535, F 306 and F 471 of convoy No. 4 left Kerch empty at 0300 and put in to Genichesk at 1645. They will leave there for Temriuk with tug "Amsel" and lighter "Olympia" on 26 April.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

At 0415 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 18 small vessels proceeding from west to east. At 0445 3 small vessels were observed lying off Kabardinka. In good visibility daylight reconnaissance observed 1 small armed vessel in the southeastern Black Sea 55 miles west of Ochenchiri and 1 freighter of 2,500 G.R.T. off Cape Yasun (Turkish coast). The Caucasus coast from Novorossisk to Ochenchiri was examined as far as 20 km. from the shore. Ghelenjik, the Chobi estuary, Poti and Batum could not be examined on account of high-level fog. Tuapse: 1 torpedo boat, 1 small armed vessel, 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels and several boats. Ochenchiri: 2 submarine tenders, 6 submarines, 4 small armed vessels and 2 coastal vessels. Aerial photographic reconnaissance also revealed 2 freighters totaling 3,000 G.R.T. in this harbor. Aerial photographic reconnaissance also showed Sukhum (partly obscured by cloud): 1 motor minesweeper, 2 M.T.B.s, 1 coastal vessel of about 400 G.R.T. and 20 boats; northwest of Sukum 1 gunboat (60 meters long), 1 tanker of 7,000 G.R.T., 1 floating dock and 3 boats. Sochi: 3 motor minesweepers and 25 boats (10 of them on shore), Tuapse: 1 minesweeper, 3 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s 2 freighters each about 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,800 G.R.T., 1 floating crane and 20 boats.

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Photographic reconnaissance over the Sea of Azov revealed the following: Achuevski at 1114 and again at 1324: About 30 fishing vessels, also 1 tug and 1 lighter at sea on course for Achuevski. Primorsko Akhtari: About 80 rowing boats; outside Primorsko no assemblies of boats at sea. The motor minesweeper and 16 other boats reported on 24 April were no longer there.

Fishery Sadki at 1318: About 60 rowing boats. Fishery Kamyshevotka: About 5 rowing boats. Yeisk: 3 small armed fishing vessels, 1 small paddle-steamer (apparently beached) and about 35 boats. Fishery Walfirovka: 7 boats. No concentrations of vessels were observed at sea.

Own Situation:

0840 On completion of their operation S 26 and S 72 put in to Ivan Baba.
During the evening while proceeding between Cape Utrich and Myshako, the boats were illuminated several times by flares dropped by 3 Russian MBR 2 flying boats which were patrolling the coast.
At 2106 one torpedo was fired at the landing point; another torpedo, a ground-runner, exploded 100 meters from E-boat S 72. Heavy fog at times hindered further operations. Apart from a small vessel (probably an M.T.B.,) course southeast, neither transport vessels nor patrols were observed at the beachhead or off the coast.

Weather forecast (0930): East of the Crimea and Caucasus coast: S winds, force 4, decreasing to force 2, no cloud, visibility above 10 miles, night temperature 7°-10° C.

1150 Naval Port Commander, Anapa reported the arrival of 2 Italian E-boats and at 1320 the arrival of a third (see yesterday's orders).

1255 The following orders were issued to Italian E-boat Flotilla for operations on the night of 26/27 April:

1) After refueling, 3 Italian E-boats will sail from Anapa at 1700 for operations in the attack area between Tuapse and Uchdere.

2) Task: To attack enemy supplies. Torpedoes to be used also against lighters.

3) On passage to the operational area remain about 20 miles from the coast.

4) Boats will leave the operational area about one hour before dawn and will put into Theodosia.

1754 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that 3 naval gunnery lighters will leave Constantza at 2000 for Constantza. They will be led by motor minesweeper R 37. Speed 8 knots.

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When the naval gunnery lighters arrive in Sevastopol, I intend to inspect them to make sure that they are operational as Group South has ordered their immediate transfer to the Sea of Azov. With reference to this order, in a telephone conversation which I had today with Chief of Staff, Naval Group South, I was informed that their transfer to the Sea of Azov should not be hastened at the expense of bringing them to full operational readiness.

Following the completion of operation "Neptune", during which the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was strengthened by 1 boat, this boat must now be made available to Commander, Convoys and Escorts for escort work.

At 1935 Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to move R 165 from Kerch to Sevastopol to be at the disposal of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea. On passage she will sweep route "Brown" from point 18 to point 1 with oropesa gear.

A conference which I had today with Commanding General, 1st Air Corps revealed that we agree in our assessment of the situation in the Sea of Azov. Altogether there were 6 small armed vessels there, one of which was destroyed off Primorsko Akhtari. Otherwise only fishing vessels (rowing boats). Fighter protection was promised for the transfer of the dock from Mariupol to Kerch. The time of the transfer will however first have to be arrangement with the Air Force, as the availability of fighters depends upon the development of the Russian offensive near Krimskaya. Hopes of an air attack on Yeisk as suggested by me (see War Diary 25 April) were again held out.

Enemy Air Activity:

Enemy air attacks were again mainly directed on Anapa, where 66 heavy and numerous light bombs were dropped on the harbor area during the period 1900/25 April to 0300/26 April. Four men were wounded and one 15 cm. gun and 1 machine-gun type 34 were put out of action. Damage to buildings.

No night air raids on Temriuk.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported that about 20 incendiaries and explosive bombs were dropped on the southern sector and the town area. The harbor sites, the southern sector and the southern part of the town were bombarded by artillery and rocket-firing guns.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

In the Sea of Azov a new line of buoys was laid from point 14 to point 17. The route from point 17 to point 21 was searched on both sides of the line of buoys by FZ-boats using skid gear and noise box (turbines). After the skid gear had been tried out, the stretch from Ak Burun via point 10 to point 8 was checked once with skid gear and noise box (turbines). No mines swept. The stretch from point 8 to point 5 was also searched 4 times, without result.

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Minesweeping planes checked a stretch 200-600 meters south of the rope railway 10 times, also the route from point 14 to Cape Kasantip to a width of 400 meters on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

Boats of Harbor Defense Flotilla using combined sweeps swept the channel beside the rope and cable railways for moored mines. An FZ-group using towed loop gear swept the southern entrance to Kerch Strait from point 5 to point Brown 18.

1515 Naval Port Commander, Genichesk reported the setting up of a mine-watching station on the island of Biriuchi. Further sweeps by the FZ-group off Genichesk had no result.

Supply Traffic:

a) Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled under good conditions. Weather situation: S winds, force 4, sea 3, temperature 12° C.

b) Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoys No. 46 and 47 with 7 naval ferry barges ran as scheduled without incident. At 1635 3 naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 48 left Kerch.

c) Temriuk convoys:

Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 9, consisting of 2 naval ferry barges, 1 naval ferry barge (hospital) and 1 tug, left at 1800 for Temriuk. Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 3 ran according to plan. At 0645 the 3 naval ferry barges put in to Genichesk.

At 1200 3 naval ferry barges, tug "Amsel" and lighter "Olympia" (convoy No. 4) sailed from Genichesk for Temriuk.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Between 0410 and 0445 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 29 vessels leaving the landing area for the south.

Daylight reconnaissance was hampered by high fog in the sea area south of Kerch Peninsula and Kerch Strait. There are no enemy reports from this area. No real changes compared with previous days on the Caucasus coast and in the southeastern Black Sea where visibility was good. Shipping in the harbors from Ghelenjik to Ochenchiri was also only slightly changed; in Ghelenjik the number of M.T.B.s had slightly increased.

At 1107 there were 2 minesweepers, 2 motor minesweepers, course southeast, south of Tuapse, 1 motor minesweeper, 2 M.T.B.s, course northeast, 15 miles southwest of Tuapse; coastal vessel of 600 G.R.T., course southeast, 15 miles northwest of Sochi: at 1136 1 motor minesweeper; course southeast, 10 miles south of Gagri; at 1202 1 torpedo boat, 1 freighter of 1,500 G.R.T. and two small armed vessels, course southeast, in the Ochenchiri area; at 1255 1 towed convoy with lighter of about 600 G.R.T. in the roads off Tuapse; at 1312 1 coastal vessel of about 400 G.R.T. and 2 motor minesweepers putting in to Ghelenjik.

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Night reconnaissance off the Caucasus coast from Novorossisk to Ghelenjik had to be broken off owing to fog. Nothing sighted. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that according to the radio traffic there were no large surface vessels at sea. In the evening activity of small vessels increased off the central and northern east coast. Submarines detected: 4 in the central and western Black Sea and 2 off the east coast.

Own Situation:

- 0400 In accordance with yesterday's orders motor mine-sweeper R 165 left Kamish Burun for Sevastopol.
- 0720 Italian E-boats 568, 570 and 572 put in to Theodosia from their operation. As a result of poor visibility, the boats did not sight anything in the operational area south of Tuapse and did not discover any traffic with their search gear.

Weather forecast (0930): South Crimean and North Caucasus coasts: Odessa-Yalta: light variable winds, fair to cloudless, isolated fog-banks. Yalta - Novorossisk: S winds, force 4, at times fog with high fog-banks, otherwise visibility 5-8 miles, night temperature not below 3° C.

From the scanty traffic of the past few days it seems that the flow of supplies to Tuapse for the expected large-scale attack on the Gonenkopf bridgehead has ceased for the time being. Probably with the imminent heavy demands on stores, the traffic from the southern harbors to Tuapse will soon be resumed. The supply traffic carried on by small vessels from Tuapse to Ghelenjik and further to the bridgehead will probably be continued to a certain extent.

Boats must operate against small vessels proceeding between Tuapse, Ghelenjik and Myshako and as far as possible a constant watch must be kept on the coastal route southeast of Tuapse. The boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla will therefore be out on operations tonight, 1 group northwest and 1 group southeast of Tuapse.

- 1130 1st E-boat Flotilla received orders to operate in 2 groups against enemy supply traffic close to the Caucasus coast and traffic proceeding to the beachhead on the night of 27/28 April. From 2100 the first group (3 boats) will take up a waiting position between Cape Idokopas and Ghelenjik, after that from 0200 until just before dawn they will be between Cape Doob and Myshako for operations against enemy vessels unloading at the landing stages and the traffic to the beachhead. Return passage close to the Taman and Crimean coasts. The second group will leave Ivan Daba at 1400 for the operational area between Tuapse and Cape Uchdere. Return passage 1 hour before dawn at a certain distance from the coast.
- Task for both groups: To operate against enemy supply traffic-including small vessels-and patrols, using torpedoes and guns.

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Torpedoes to be used against the landing stages only if vessels are definitely recognised there.

At 1400 and 1600 respectively the 2 groups left Ivan Baba in accordance with their orders.

The transfer of the floating dock from Mariupol to Kerch will probably not take place before 4 May, as the freight towing vessels which are to tow it are not available until then. I have therefore decided to use the interim period for improving the armament on the dock. It will now have four 2 cm. guns instead of two as hitherto planned. Relevant orders have been issued. In order to give this important convoy as much protection as possible I intend to transfer to the Sea of Azov as soon as possible the 3 naval gunnery lighters at present on passage to Sevastopol, so that they can be used for escorting the dock.

1600 The enemy has begun the expected large-scale attack on the Gotenkopf bridgehead near Krimskaya. It therefore seems highly probable that the enemy will try to support these operations and in particular tie down our forces by landing attempts on the north and south coasts of Taman Peninsula.

In the Sea of Azov they might use the great numbers of small vessels and boats spotted by our air reconnaissance. An increased watch on the north coast of Taman Peninsula therefore seems to me to be vital during the next few nights. The south coast is as much as possible kept under observation by the continual operations of Italian E-boat Flotilla and the naval ferry barges proceeding to Anapa.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla therefore received the following orders for the 27/28 April:

At about 1900 motor minesweepers R 35 and R 163 should sail from Kamish Burun. From 2100 until dawn they will be on patrol between Cape Achilleon and Temriuk about 10 miles off the coast to give protection against enemy landings.

Another effective watch on the North Taman coast is afforded by the naval ferry barges of the Genichesk-Temriuk and Kerch-Temriuk traffic, as these are regularly off Temriuk at dawn and thus observe the route from Kerch Strait to Temriuk during the night and in early hours of the morning.

1835 1st E-boat Flotilla reported that S 49 and S 52 had sailed from Constantza for Ivan Baba. Further, S 42, S 45 and S 46 will probably be ready on 1 May.

Concluding the daily report for 27 April, Air Force Staff, Crimea reported the execution of the planned air attack on Yeisk. According to statements from the dive-bomber formation which carried out the attack, apart from direct hits on the harbor installations there were also direct hits on four of the motor minesweepers lying at the pier.

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These boats were left burning and 1 other boat sank after a heavy explosion. The attacks took place on 26 April. According to this statement and remembering the boat set on fire on Akhtari roads on 25 April, of the 6 motor minesweepers or small armed vessels discovered in the Sea of Azov (see War Diary 26 April) all except one must be destroyed or heavily damaged. This is however hardly likely as the daily air reconnaissance reports for Yeisk for the period 23-26 April (before the attack) show 3 motor minesweepers, on 27 April (after the attack) still 1 motor minesweeper. The aerial photograph of 27 April does show that bombs have fallen close to the motor minesweeper berths of the previous day, but only one of the boats seem to have been damaged. Hence at most 3 motor minesweepers or small armed vessels can be assumed as destroyed (including the one burnt out off Akhtari on 25 April).

Enemy Air Activity:

During the night of 26/27 April, the enemy again carried out heavy air attacks against the harbor area of Taganrog. Many 250 kg. bombs were dropped from a great height, some of them with delayed action fuses. Buildings of Naval Harbor Master were damaged and there were casualties from flying glass.

Between 1900 on 26 April and 0300 on 27 April 10 bombs were dropped on Anapa. No damage.
At 2015 on 26 April 4 bombs were dropped on the center of the town of Temriuk.
At 0600 the enemy bombarded sites at the east harbor and the southern sector at Novorossisk. At 1900 artillery and mortar fire on the harbor sites, the southern sector and the southern part of the town. Further machine-gun fire on positions in the southern sector. Supplementary report from Naval Port Commander on the attack of 24 April: 1 casualty from Battery Memel (Myshako).

At 0130 2 enemy M.T.B.s were off Anapa harbor. Exchanges of gun fire (34 rounds from the Anapa battery). One 4 cm. hit and several 2 cm. hits on one of the M.T.B.s were observed by Naval Port Commander. The second boat hid herself in a smoke screen and observation was impossible. After engagement, both boats disappeared from sight on westerly course.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

Sweeping was continued as scheduled in the northern part of Kerch Strait, off the north coast of Kerch Peninsula and off Genichesk. No mines swept. Motor Minesweeper R 165 swept route Brown from Cape Tkil to Sevastopol with oropesa gear. No mines swept.

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Supply Traffic:

- a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic ran as scheduled in favorable weather and good conditions. No special incidents. Five naval ferry barges, 3 lighters and 1 towing vessel were employed in east-west traffic, 5 naval ferry barges made 5 crossings in west-east traffic and 10 lighters were used for loading and unloading operations.
- b) Anapa convoys: Anapa convoys Nos. 48 and 49 ran according to plan. At 1700 naval ferry barges F 122, F 333 and F 534 sailed from Kerch as Anapa convoy No. 50.
- c) Temriuk convoys: In Kerch-Temriuk traffic "Theodor 9" ran as scheduled with 3 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and 1 lighter; also "Toni 4" in Genichesk-Temriuk traffic with 3 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and 1 lighter. At 1300 3 naval ferry barges sailed from Genichesk for Temriuk ("Toni 5").

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Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

The recent lull in traffic off the Caucasus coast continues. In good visibility of between 30 and 50 miles, the coastal area as far as Ochomchiri was examined. No important enemy shipping traffic discovered. Poti and Potum again could not be examined owing to the weather.

From the landing point Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk again reported the usual traffic of small vessels in the early morning: at 0430 9 vessels proceeding from west to southeast.

Results of daylight reconnaissance: Ghelenjik: 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 G.R.T. and 40 boats; at 1011 3 boats putting in and 1 coastal vessel putting out, course southeast. Ochomchiri: 2 freighters of 1,000 and 2,000 G.R.T. respectively, 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,000 G.R.T., 4 motor minesweepers, 5 submarines and 15 small boats. Tuapse at 1223; 1 minesweeper, 2 motor minesweepers, 4 M.T.B.s, 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 6 coastal vessels totaling 2,200 G.R.T., 1 floating crane and 15 boats.

At 1020 1 coastal vessel, course northwest, 20 miles west of Tuapse; 1 submarine, course northwest, 5 miles west of Tuapse; further at 1141 1 coastal vessel with 1 patrol vessel, course southeast, west of Ochomchiri.

At 2010 night reconnaissance of the coast from Novorossisk to Adler discovered 3 or 4 small vessels 10 miles southwest of Ghelenjik, at 2115 3 small vessels 20 miles south of Ghelenjik, at 2210 1 ship 25 miles west of Tuapse and at 2325 2 small vessels 20 miles northwest of Tuapse. Further south, night reconnaissance was impossible because of the weather.

At 2218 and 2355 respectively, Main Naval D/F Station located 1 submarine 28 miles and 1 submarine 35 miles south of Sudak, further at 2224 and 2315 1 submarine about 40 miles and 1 about 55 miles south of Sevastopol.

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From these positions they might possibly be the same submarines on both occasions i.e. two submarines in all. This assumption is confirmed from observation of the radio traffic in which 2 submarines were noticed in the central to western Black Sea and 2 off the south Caucasus coast and in the eastern Black Sea. According to observation of the radio traffic there were no large vessels at sea.

Own Situation:

During the evening of 27 April, U 19 reported that she had a man seriously ill on board. She was then given orders to put in to Theodosia. Anti-submarine measures were therefore suspended. At 0800 on 28 April, the submarine by chance met E-boat S 51 returning from the operational area in 44,4°N, 37°0'E and turned the sick man over to her. U 19 then returned to her operational area.

0600 : Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 163 put in to Kamish Durun from their patrol line between Cape Achilleon and Temriuk. No enemy forces observed.

0813 E-boats S 47, S 72 and S 102 returned from their operation to Ivan Baba. In accordance with their orders, the boats were standing between Ghelenjik and Cape Idskopas during the first half of the night and reported no shipping traffic and no patrol vessels, only searchlight activity off Chugovkopas. From 0200 to 0320 nothing seen of the enemy off Novorossisk Bay. In Kabardinka Bay they observed continual firing of white starshells. Their late return to Ivan Baba was caused by engine failure aboard S 102 during return passage.

At 1050 S 26 and S 51 returned. This group of boats had also met neither shipping traffic nor patrols in the sector between Tuapse and Cape Uchdere. The noticeable lull in traffic, which led me to order the E-boats to operate in 2 groups (see War Diary 27 April), is again confirmed by this report from the E-boats. Yesterday's review of the enemy's supply position leads me to think that the lull will probably continue for a few more days.

The E-boats are to rest tonight as they have now been out on operations for 3 consecutive nights. Italian E-boat Flotilla received orders to sail for Anapa at 1200 with all operational boats. After re-fueling, proceed from there to the attack area southeast of Tuapse (keeping away from the coast) for operations against enemy shipping close to the coast.

As Italian E-boat Flotilla later reported that with one exception all the boats are non-operational for engine overhaul, these orders cannot be put into execution for the night of 28/29 April. So that even in the absence of operations by the E-boats and the Italian E-boat Flotilla we can still keep a watch on the enemy traffic to and from the beachhead, I have ordered 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla to take up a waiting position on the night of 28/29 April between Cape Suchuk and Myshako.

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They are to remain there until half an hour before dawn.
Task: To operate against shipping traffic to the bridge-head. Operations against the Myshako beachhead and the vessels lying there. Return to Kamish Burun on 29 April.

At 1830 motor minesweepers R 163 and R 35 sailed from Kerch for their operations.

0820 E-boats S 49 and S 52 put into Ivan Baba from Constantza. At 1900 E-boat S 52 left again for Constantza because she had lost her starboard screw. This will be replaced immediately in Constantza.

Weather forecast (0930): Coastal area off the southern entrance to Kerch Strait and Caucasus coast: Light winds, mainly N, high fog, night temperature not under 70C.

1000 Naval Port Commander, Temriuk sighted 5 vessels coming from the northwest about 20 miles off the harbor entrance. They turned off to the west at 1115. Type could not be made out because of the distance, but they could certainly not have been German vessels. Air reconnaissance was sent out, but did not discover anything.

This message persuaded me to use the motor minesweepers lying in Kerch for coastal defense duty off the north Taman coast. Another protection against surprise landing attempts is afforded by the naval ferry barge groups of the Genichesk-Temriuk traffic (see War Diary 27 April).

1100 I went to Sevastopol to inspect the naval gunnery lighters which arrived there this morning. The inspection showed that the naval gunnery lighters in their present condition are not operational either in their equipment or personnel.

1) Some of the pontoons are not water tight because their flange-joints leak; as a result the ammunition and supplies carried were partially swamped. The joint strengtheners already delivered will have to be added in Sevastopol.

2) The vessels have not full anti-magnetic protection; degaussing equipment not yet built in as it is still at testing stage.

3) Crews for the most part have no naval training, gun crews have no training, and there is no one trained to take charge of fire control. As in my opinion the strength of the naval gunnery lighters lies in well-directed fire from the 8, 8 cm. gun, these deficiencies are of decisive importance. For these reasons I have given the following orders:

a) The joints are to be reinforced immediately by Naval Fitting-Out Depot Sevastopol.

b) Degaussing equipment will be put in later in Sevastopol as soon as we have the results of the trials with naval gunnery lighter No. 4 in Constantza.

c) The flotilla will carry out a short 10 day training period with a final inspection in Sevastopol before the boats are transferred to the Sea of Azov.

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At 1235 Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus took over the command of the west bank of Kerch Strait. He reported further that Naval Port Commander 21 of Eupatoria is with effect from 27 April separated from the area of Naval Shore Commander.

Following the more frequent appearance of enemy submarines in the western Black Sea, Group South sent me an inquiry, to which I replied that some of the convoys from Constantza to Sevastopol proceed on the northern route, some on the southern route. Routes are changed at irregular intervals.

In view of the situation at the Gonenkopf bridgehead, I think it advisable not to report the projected release of the Special Naval Transport Staff, Kerch to Group South as yet. We shall have to wait a few days to see if the new Russian offensive does not suddenly require a great many transports over Kerch Strait in one or the other direction. If this should happen, the presence of Rear Admiral Scheurlen would seem desirable.

Following the loss of 35 barrels of gasoline when the store at Yalta was bombed on 24 April, I have ordered an immediate check-up on the method of storage of fuel stocks in the harbors. The danger of air attack should be obviated as far as possible by storage in cellars or bunkers.

Enemy Air Activity:

Air attacks on naval bases have been noticeably less frequent than in the past few days, probably because the planes are being used to support the Krimskaya offensive. Temriuk: 20 bombs were dropped on the harbor and the Kuban bridge. No damage.

Anapa: 8 bombs. No damage to naval installations.

Situation at Novorossisk unchanged. At 0600 artillery and mortar bombardment of the harbor sites, the southern part of the town and the southern sector, rocket gunfire on the site at the west harbor.

Artillery bombardment of the site at the east harbor at 1900. At night 11 flares and 1 explosive bomb were dropped on the southern sector.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued according to plan. No mines swept. The following vessels were used: 1 FZ-group with 2 sweeps in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait, 1 FZ-group off Genichesk harbor entrance up to 20 miles out to sea, a group with skid gear in the northern entrance to Kerch Strait and off the north coast of Kerch Peninsula, also 5 minesweeping planes in the latter area.

Supply Traffic:

a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic ran as scheduled in favorable weather and under good conditions.

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b) Anapa convoys:

Convoys Nos. 50 and 51 ran as scheduled without incident. Convoy No. 52 left Kerch for Anapa at 1640.

c) Temriuk convoys:

Temriuk convoy No. 10 sailed from Temriuk at 1800 for return passage to Kerch with 3 naval ferry barges, freight towing vessel "Adelheid" and 1 lighter. Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 5 sailed from Genichesk for Temriuk at 1400 with 3 naval ferry barges. All convoys ran as scheduled without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance of the Caucasus coast showed no important changes compared with the previous days.

An evening report from U 9 on 29 April reveals that the enemy is now taking at least part of their convoy traffic a good distance from the coast. U 9 has observed convoy traffic 30 miles off the coast.

Results: At 1035 Sochi 1 submarine, course south, 25 miles southwest of Sochi; 3 patrol vessels 10 miles off the coast in the Tuapse-Gudauty area; at 1225 2 boats, course northwest 6 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, also 5 small armed vessels putting in to Ghelenjik from the north; at 1239 5 small armed vessels south of the beachhead, course north (seemed to be dropping depth charges); 5 motor minesweepers in line abreast off Ghelenjik, also apparently dropping depth charges (purpose seemed to be to sweep non-contact firing mines): at 1423 1 submerged submarine 60 miles southwest of Adler.

Nothing unusual about the shipping in port. Night reconnaissance detected several boats at the beachhead at 2045. Further south no results because of fog.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located 4 submarines in the central to western Black Sea and 4 in the sea area off the east coast. According to observation of the radio traffic there were no large surface vessels at sea.

Own Situation:

Situation at the Kutan bridgehead:

The enemy offensive against the front of 44th Army Corps which began on the afternoon of 27 April has so far been everywhere repulsed in heavy defensive fighting. The preliminary artillery bombardment with air support on a scale never yet encountered was followed by an infantry attack. Enemy numbers were far superior to ours. According to a report from Army Group, the enemy made no real gains of territory anywhere. They are expected to continue their attacks on 30 April.

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I still expect that the enemy will support their offensive by night landings on the north and south coasts of Taman Peninsula to upset our rear communications and tie down our forces.

0020 Motor minesweepers R 35 and R 163 put into Kerch. From 0030 to 0230 the boats were in the operational area off Myshako, about 2,000 meters off the coast. Visibility was very poor as a result of fog. Only 1 enemy motor minesweepers and 2 M.T.B.s were detected in the beams of coastal searchlights. As they were making off near Cape Doob, there was no engagement. The Commander of the group did not carry out the bombardment of the landing point in accordance with his orders as he observed fighting on the shore near the landing area and thought that our own troops must be in action there. In actual fact the front is unchanged. After refueling in Kerch, the boats will proceed to Kamish Burun.

Weather forecast (0930): S winds, force 1-3. Western Black Sea and Crimean coast: Fair, visibility 8-10 miles. Caucasus coast: thick fog at high level, isolated fog-banks at sea, night temperature around 8°C.

0958 Steamer "Arkadia" which was on passage to Constantza escorted by motor minesweepers ran on to our own minefield in 44°18.4'N, 28°49.4'E and sank after 7 minutes. No casualties, no one hurt. According to a report from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, the cause was probably due to an error in calculating her position. Closer investigations are in progress.

At 1445 on orders from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, motor minesweeper R 36 proceeded to the position of the wreck of "Arkadia" to discover the exact position and mark it. In so doing, R 36 also struck a mine at the same position at 1742. No casualties or wounded. The fore part of the ship to the forward edge of the bridge was torn off. The boat was towed to Constantza. Her engine is undamaged. I have decided to fly to Constantza on 30 April to clear up the matter.

In view of reconnaissance reports for the evening of 28 April mentioning several enemy ships about 4 miles off the Caucasus coast, it must be assumed that after our continual E-boat attacks near the coast the enemy has recently moved their shipping traffic away from the coast. I have therefore given orders that 1st E-boat Flotilla will occupy a reconnaissance line off Cape Idokopas perpendicular to the coast and up to 8 miles from it on the night of 29/30 April. The patrol will consist of 6 boats, operating in pairs standing on and off along the patrol line. They will remain in the operational area until an hour before dawn. I have requested 1st Air Corps that if possibly they are to send 2 Lichtenstein planes on reconnaissance on the night of 29/30 April. They should maintain contact with any convoys located and guide 1st E-boat Flotilla to them.

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U 9 which has also reported a diversion of convoy traffic up to some 30 miles out to sea was ordered by me to remain in an operational area with northern and southern limits as before but extended out to sea up to 35 miles from the coast.

I have sent a report to Group South on the result of my visit to Sevastopol yesterday and the measures ordered for the naval gunnery lighters (see War Diary 28 April). Group gave their consent to these measures by teletype.

Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla has received orders from me that the naval ferry barges now under training should be transferred from Sevastopol to Kerch as soon as possible. Naval ferry barges are urgently required in Kerch, since three are undergoing overhaul and three more are non-operational.

In view of the recent increased activity of enemy submarines against our supply convoys in the western Black Sea, I have requested 1st Air Corps that, in addition to the day reconnaissance, Lichtenstein planes should keep a watch on our supply routes to a width of 30-40 miles on the nights on which our convoys run. I made reference to the loss of "Suceava" on the night of 19/20 April and the considerable danger such losses entail for the supply situation, at the same time emphasizing that there can be no weakening of night reconnaissance in the eastern Black Sea. 1st Air Corps informed me that at their present strength it would be impossible to fly night reconnaissance with Lichtenstein planes, but that more planes have been requested.

Following the loss of "Suceava" due to a torpedo attack on 20 April, I have given orders to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea that he is to instruct all commanders of convoys that depending on the visibility they should carry out frequent alterations of course at irregular intervals. A change of course every two hours as has been the practice so far is not in my opinion sufficient in clear moonlight.

Enemy Air Activity:

There was no enemy air activity on naval targets on 29 April. Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight artillery fire on the harbor sites, the southern sector and the southern part of town during the evening. Casualties: 1 man wounded at Coastal Shipping Control Office No. 7.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait and on the route from Kerch Strait to Genichesk was continued by 2 FZ-groups, 1 group with skid gear, 3 motor minesweepers (M) and 4 minesweeping planes. Minesweeping planes swept 2 mines northwest of Cape Chroni.

Commander, Danube Flotilla reported that "Grafenau" has now been equipped with a skid gear generator and a polarity reversing device. After taking over the skid gear from the transports already on passage to Kerch, "Grafenau" will be ready for operations.

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As it has been discovered that on normal check sweeps (in Kerch Strait etc.) motor fishing vessels are quite adequate for towing skid gear, I have given orders that "Grafenau" will not be used for such routine work. Separate decisions will be made in the case of special operations (e.g. transfer of docks).

Supply Traffic:

a) Kerch Strait ferry traffic ran as scheduled in favorable weather and good conditions. East-west traffic: 7 naval ferry barges used on 7 crossings, 1 towing vessel and 1 lighter. West-east traffic: 7 naval ferry barges used on 8 crossings and 10 lighters used for loading and unloading.

b) Anapa convoys:

"Kloiner Bar" convoys Nos. 52 and 53 ran according to plan. At 1730 3 naval ferry barges sailed from Kerch (convoy No. 54).

c) Temriuk convoys:

At 0600 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 5 put into Temriuk with 3 naval ferry barges according to plan. At 0515 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 10 (3 naval ferry barges, 1 towing vessel and 1 lighter) began return passage to Kerch. At 1830 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 11 (4 naval ferry barges, "Hainburg" and 1 lighter) left Kerch for Temriuk.

d) Timber transports from Yalta to Kerch ran according to plan.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

The results of today's air reconnaissance showed an increase in the number of coastal vessels and escort forces in Ghelenjik and Tuapse. Probably enemy traffic along the Caucasus coast will show a gradual increase after the lull of the last few days.

At 0330 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk observed 2 small vessels leaving the beachhead for the southeast and at 0345 3 other small vessels leaving the beachhead for Cape Doob. Army Group A reported 6 vessels, 4 of them fairly large, proceeding to and from the beachhead during the night, further at 1225 7 vessels Ghelenjik and at 1800 10 ships putting in. Daylight reconnaissance flown in good visibility did not observe any important movements of enemy shipping in the southeastern Black Sea. The coast was examined and photographed as far as Batumi, harbors as far as Ochenchiri. One towed convoy was observed putting into Ghelenjik. Otherwise only slight activity of small armed vessels.

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Enemy shipping in port: Ghelenjik at 1218: 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 G.R.T., 9 motor minesweepers, 13 M.T.B.s 2 small armed vessels and about 50 boats. Tuapse at 1118: 9 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 G.R.T., 2 freighters, each 1,500 G.R.T., 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 1 destroyer, 1 torpedoboat, 9 motor minesweepers, 8 M.T.B.s and 3 minesweepers. Sochi: 2 motor minesweepers and 20 boats. Sukhum: 1 freighter of 800 G.R.T., 2 coastal vessels totaling 500 G.R.T., 2 motor minesweepers and 18 small boats. Ochemchiri: 2 coastal vessels totaling 600 G.R.T., 2 submarine tenders, 6 submarines, 4 motor minesweepers and 20 small boats.

Night reconnaissance was flown only from Novorossisk to Sochi. At 2125 1 coastal vessel was detected south of Ghelenjik and at 2250 1 vessel was observed 10 miles northwest of Sochi.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that according to the radio traffic there were 2 destroyers off the east coast during the evening. Submarines located: 3 in the Western Black Sea and 4 off the east coast. At 2200 Main Naval D/F Station and Naval Port Commander, Ak Mechet located 1 submarine 25 miles from Cape Khersonese and bearing 290°.

Own Situation:

0720 Six boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla put into Ivan Baba (S 26, S 47, S 51, S 72 and S 102). From 2030 until 0250 the boats were in their prescribed patrol line near to Cape Idokopas. At 0218 the pair of boats nearest the shore attacked a convoy coming from the northwest consisting of 3 coastal vessels, 3 M.T.B.s and 2 motor gunboats. S 51 torpedoed and sunk 2 coastal vessels, each 600 G.R.T., while S 26 sank 1 coastal vessel of 500 G.R.T. The convoy was proceeding very close to the coast. The enemy sent motor gunboats against the E-boats and after the searchlights had illuminated them, coastal batteries opened up. No damage or casualties.

The boats lying some distance from the coast did not observe any shipping traffic. Patrol activity by 2 gunboats and 1 M.T.B. about 2 or 3 miles from the coast.

Weather forecast (0930); Odessa-Novorossisk: S winds, force 4-5, after disappearance of fog visibility 6-10 miles, night temperature about 8°C.

In order to make a personal investigation of the causes of the mining of steamer "Arkadia" and motor minesweeper "R 36", I went to Constantza today. I do not think that there was any negligence on the part of the commander of the convoy. Apart from the error in calculations (stronger current towards the south - caused as we know by the strong flow from the Danube in the spring), the basic cause of the accidents lies in the many changes in personnel at German Naval Command, Rumania (entailing the loss of many details only learned by practical experience) and in the inexperience of the young officers in command of the vessels in the convoys. A detailed written report is in course of preparation.

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Following reconnaissance reports about increased use of small vessels in enemy supply traffic to the beachhead south of Novorossisk the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla received the following orders:

During the night of 30 April/1 May, motor minesweepers R 35 and R163 will operate against enemy traffic in the Myshako/Cape Doob area. Task: To tie down enemy supply traffic, attack enemy patrols and bombard the landing stages at Myshako. They are to avoid superior enemy forces. They should proceed to Anapa keeping close to the coast, remain in the operational area until 0230 and then return to Kamish Burun.

There will be no operations by the Italian E-boats because of the weather and because two of the 3 operational boats were damaged during the air attack on Theodosia (see "Enemy Air Activity"). Boats will probably be operational on 1 May.

In reply to an inquiry from Group South occasioned by an extract they had received from the Fuhrer's Operational Order No. 5 of 13 March, I sent in the following review of the situation:

"1) The attack on Krimskaya must be regarded as the Russians' first step against Taman Peninsula. The more we resist at the Gotenkopf bridgehead, the more must we expect operations by the Russian Fleet aimed at encircling our front from the south, interrupting the supply routes from Kerch to Anapa, in Kerch Strait and off the southern Crimea, also small-scale raids in the Sea of Azov against the Taman and Kerch Peninsulas and possibly Genichesk. Serious attacks on the north coast of the Sea of Azov are of secondary consideration.

2) Own Situation:

The projected reinforcement of our positions at the Gotenkopf bridgehead (construction of bunkers) is still in the early stages. Nevertheless, in spite of the enemy's recognized preparations and the weakening of our troops by almost two years' uninterrupted operations, Army Group A does not regard the situation as at all threatening. A necessary condition however is that there is no interruption in the stipulated quantity of supplies and that they continue to be brought by sea as close to the front as possible - Anapa or Tamriuk. In addition, troops, tanks and heavy artillery may have to be taken over there at short notice. Large-scale east-west movements of troops are not to be expected at present.

3) Tasks for Admiral, Black Sea:

Main task is still the attack on the Russian seaborne supplies, which in the long run the enemy must have even if their rear land communications are fully restored. The present scarcity of traffic close to the Caucasus coast must be considered as deliberate camouflage for the attack now in progress.

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This measure became possible after they were certain of their first stocks, probably built up from mid-February to the beginning of April (heavy traffic then). The supply traffic to the Myshako bridgehead will never be completely disrupted, because the enemy proceeds by day so long as there are no air attacks or at night with small vessels from Kabardinka Bay to the innermost landing stage protected by the minefields. Despite this fact there must be constant repetition of surprise attacks.

Parallel with this offensive task there is the protection of our Rumania-Crimea-Kerch-Taman sea supplies and our coastal waters against surprise landing operations. The important points are the Constantza-Sevastopol sea route and Anapa, Kerch Strait and Theodosia. The protection of the north and south coasts of the Sea of Azov will not become especially important until large concentrations of shipping are observed for certain in the Rostov-Yeisk-Akhtari area. At present the shipping there consists almost exclusively of rowing and fishing vessels not destroyed during the retreat.

4) Operations by our own forces:

- a) 30th U-boat Flotilla against seaborne supplies, main operational area Sochi-Ochenchiri.
- b) 1st E-boat Flotilla and Italian E-boats against sea supplies, main operational area Tuapse-Novorossisk, if necessary as gunboats in the Sea of Azov.
- c) 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla mainly for escort duties under Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea; Crimea group for operations against Myshako and minesweeping west of Sevastopol, if necessary as gunboats in the Sea of Azov.
- d) Harbor defense flotillas as patrol vessels mainly off Anapa, Temriuk, Theodosia and Mariupol and as escorts for convoys bound for the southern Crimea.
- e) Naval gunnery lighters as patrol vessels off Mariupol and the northern entrance to Kerch Strait including the Taman coast and Genichesk. Based at Mariupol. Attack on small Russian vessels if and when they leave harbor, perhaps in co-operation with gunboats as mentioned in b. and c.
- f) Strengthening of minefields in Kerch Strait.
- g) Naval Shore Commanders: All measures to do with equipment, organization and improvement of coastal artillery. Naval Radar Station: Sited on Crimean coast, concentrating on Kerch Strait and Sevastopol.
- h) Increased co-operation with the Air Force in the escorting of convoys at night and for offensive operations off the Caucasus coast and the Sea of Azov."

2300 Commander, Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov reported that the boat "RAS 12", which was being towed by "RA 54" of the motor minesweeper group on passage from Genichesk to Kerch, sank in approximately 45°50'N, 35°17'E. There was a rough sea and, though they were proceeding very slowly, the tow-rope broke twice and the boat was swamped and later sank. "RA 54" took over the crew. Secret material was salvaged.

Enemy Air Activity:

At noon the enemy made 2 air raids on Sevastopol and Theodosia.

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At 1315 9 DB 3 planes attacked Sevastopol flying in from the Balaklava direction. 30 bombs were dropped from a height of 2,000 - 3,000 meters. Billets of Harbor Defense Flotilla were considerably damaged. Damage to vessels: Motor vessel "Vitez" temporarily non-operational; 3 lighters, 3 boats of Harbor Defense Flotilla and naval ferry barge "F 304" slightly damaged. Naval casualties: 7 men killed and 8 wounded at Harbor Defense Flotilla billets.

Theodosia was attacked by 6 planes at 1300. They dropped about 20 bombs from a height of 2,500 meters. Three bombs landed on the mole. One man severely wounded aboard naval ferry barge F 316, 2 men slightly wounded aboard F 170 and 2 belonging to Italian E-boat Flotilla also wounded. F 316, tug "Woywoda", Italian E-boats and harbor defense vessels were damaged by splinters.

During attack on Kerch at 2045 2 bombs which hit the north dock caused slight damage to buildings and equipment. Casualties: 2 killed, 3 wounded.

During the course of the night, about 85 bombs were dropped on Novorossisk (southern sector and sites at the east harbor). During the night Anapa was attacked with 44 heavy bombs and machine-guns. Some of the planes dived low to attack. From 0000 to 0200 there were 2 enemy M.T.E.s or motor minesweepers in the bay; after 2 rounds had been fired by Battery Anapa, they made off out to sea.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued according to plan except for the FZ-group which should have been operating off Genichesk. The boats were not able to go out because of the weather. One FZ-group, 1 group with skid gear, 2 motor minesweepers (RM) and 2 minesweeping planes (JU 52) operated in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait and on the route from Kerch Strait to Genichesk. There were no mines swept.

At a conference with Army Commander, Kerch (General Foerster), I suggested that well before the winter set in the engineers should build a landing stage directly on Kerch Strait west of the fish-salting factory and connect it by road to the factory. It should then be possible to carry on supply traffic by sea even during the ice period - except when there are stormy south winds - as last winter the sea area south of the island of Kossa Tuszla remained almost completely free of ice.

Supply Traffic:

a) Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran according to plan. Six naval ferry barges and 10 lighters were employed in the west-east traffic and 2 lighters in east-west traffic.

b) Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoys No. 54 and 55 completed their passages, No. 54 with 3 naval ferry barges and No. 55 with 4 naval ferry barges.

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At 1305 convoy No. 54 was bombed by 3 planes 1 mile west of Cape Zhelezni Rog. No damage, no casualties. At 1700 Anapa convoy No. 56 sailed from Kerch and at night anchored off Cape Takil.

c) Genichesk-Temriuk convoys:

A convoy arrived at Temriuk at 0500 with 3 naval ferry barges and at 1830 returned to Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges and "Hainburg". At 1000 "Toni 5" left Temriuk for return passage to Genichesk. At 1100 "Toni 6" sailed from Genichesk for Temriuk. Both convoys consisted of 3 naval ferry barges.

d) Timber and other supply convoys along the Crimean coast were stopped because of the weather.

(Signed) Kieseritzky

Survey for April 1943.

A) Enemy merchant ships sunk:

- 1) By E-boats: 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,750 G.R.T.
2 ammunition barges
1 lighter (probably)
- 2) By motor minesweepers: 2 transport vessels totaling 250 G.R.T.
- 3) By U-boats -----

B) Enemy naval forces sunk: 1 Russian M.T.B. (by motor minesweepers)

C) Enemy planes brought down: 1

D) Enemy air raids:

- 1) On warships and convoys: 11
- 2) On Crimea harbors: 24
- 3) On ports and loading centers at the Kuban bridgehead: 45

(In figure 3., attacks of long duration, carried out on Anapa in particular, by as many as 20 waves of planes, are counted as one attack.)

E) Transportation figures April 1943:

I) Kerch Strait:	Personnel	Animals	Vehicles	Service
			(trucks & horse-drawn)	Supplies

- 1) Total
 - a) East-West 53,754 9,863 7,200 4,031 tons
 - b) West-East 39,369 2,052 2,817 71,385 "

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- 2) Navy's share (naval ferry barges and occasionally lighters)
- | | | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----|-----|----------|
| a) East-West | 11,774 | 490 | 471 | 922 tons |
| b) West-East | 582 | 72 | 42 | 21,892 " |
- II) Kerch-Anapa (naval ferry barges only)
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|---|-----|----------|
| a) East-West | 1,543 | - | 122 | 444 t |
| b) West-East | - | - | 82 | 11,723 t |
- III) Kerch-Temriuk (naval ferry barges, towing vessels and lighters)
- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|---|----|----------|
| a) East-West | 3,317 | - | 12 | 1,377 t |
| b) West-East | 16 | - | 14 | 12,259 t |
- IV) Genichesk-Temriuk (naval ferry barges and occasional lighters):
- | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|------------|
| a) East-West | - | - | - | 50 tons |
| b) West-East | - | - | - | 1,619 tons |
- V) Timber transports (for Army constructions on Kerch Strait from Yalta to Kerch) 1,086 tons of timber.
- VI) Total supplies to the front:
- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1) Total: | | | | |
| a) East-West | 58,614 | 9,868 | 7,334 | 5,902 |
| b) West-East | 39,385 | 2,052 | 2,913 | 98,072 |
| 2) Navy's share: | | | | |
| a) East-West | 16,634 | 490 | 605 | 2,793 |
| b) West-East | 598 | 72 | 138 | 48,579 |
- VII) From Bulgarian and Rumanian harbors to the Crimea: 57,180 tons
Return cargo: 13,035 tons
- VIII) During the month of April 252 ships totaling 121,204 G.R.T. were escorted by naval forces.

(Signed) Kioseritzky

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