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UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

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16 DECEMBER, 1941 - 15 MAY, 1942

PG NUMBERS 31501-31510

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OF

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On 9 December, 1941 Operations Division of German Naval Command, Rumania became known as the command of Admiral, Black Sea. Thus, although there are earlier War Diaries concerning the Black Sea area, the first War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea was issued on 16 December, 1941.



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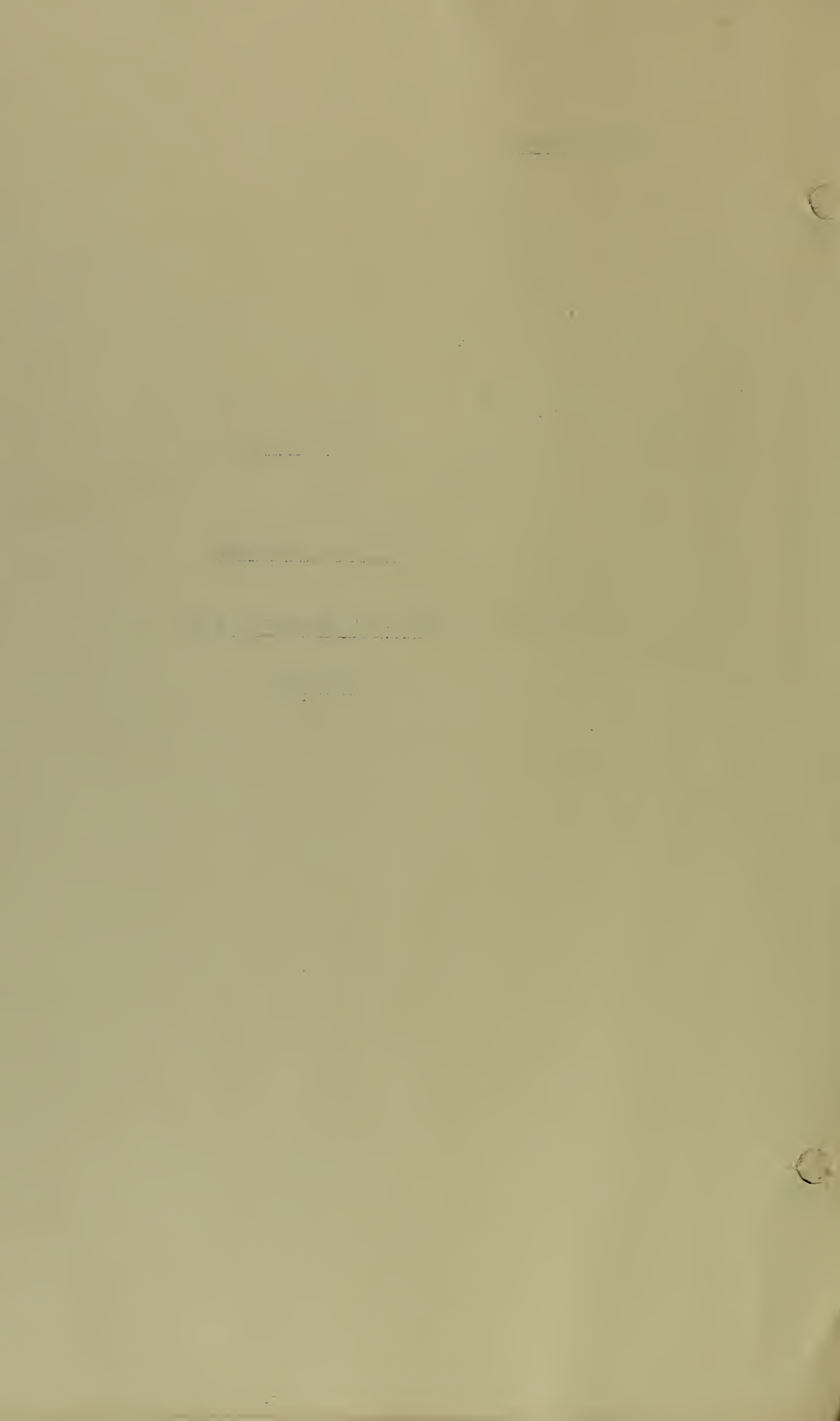
WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 DECEMBER, 1941

PG/31501



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16 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 3, fair, visibility 10 km.,
slight haze, slight sea, temperature 3° C.

Air reconnaissance again reported intensified shipping movements in the Sevastopol area: at 0800 7 medium freighters putting in to Sevastopol and 2 small freighters off the coast making for Sevastopol; at 1155 1 medium freighter, course west, about 135 miles south of Balaklava.

Main Naval D/F Station, Mamaia reported various small vessels off the east coast of the Black Sea and 4 - 6 craft (minesweepers and destroyers) in the Sevastopol area and off the southern tip of the Crimea.

0100 Steamer "Ardeal" put in to Varna from Burgas with Bulgarian escort.

The following ships put to sea to carry out the next convoy assignment:

0550 Steamer "Zar Ferdinand" escorted by destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria" from
1635 Constantza, motor vessels "Kolosvar" and "Kassa"
1705 escorted by torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul",
2335 and gunboat "Stihi" from Sulina.

0630- Commander, Danube Flotilla put to sea with
1640 4 motor minesweepers (FR) to sweep the Bugaz-Ochakov route. The minefield gap near the "Patagonia" wreck buoy was widened to 250 meters. No mines were swept.

A minesweeping plane blew up 4 magnetic mines off Odessa harbor entrance. As several check sweeps had been carried out over that area recently, it may be that the Russians are using magnetic mines with period delay mechanism or that mines have recently been laid by planes.

2300- Three fierce attacks were made on Eupatoria with
0000 guns and machine-guns, probably by 1 destroyer and 2 M.T.B.s. The attack was repulsed by troops of Naval Port Commander, supported by an Army coastal artillery detachment and military police, and the landing attempt was thus nipped in the bud (see War Diary 15 December).

11th Army H.Q. reported that, as Naval Group South and the Naval Mission had raised certain doubts regarding the proposed sea transportation

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of fuel direct to the Crimea (Eupatoria and Ak Mechet), they were prepared to forgo the requested sea transportation (see Appendix to War Diary 10 December); in any case, the supply situation on land has improved. We can now train the crews and prepare the naval ferry barges for their further tasks more efficiently. Special Duties Detachment, Constantza has been informed accordingly.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

Destroyer "Regina-Maria" ready for operations.

U-boat "Delfinul" non-operational for an unspecified period. Unfavorable weather forced the boat to break off her long operation because her consumption of fuel greatly increased. We are discussing with the Command of the Rumanian Navy whether the boat should be given a thorough dockyard overhaul with simultaneous installation of the new listening device.

Destroyer "Maresti" temporarily non-operational because of the inadequate state of training of her new personnel.

"Brunhild": dockyard overhaul period in Linz from 15 December to 15 February.

"Romulus": dockyard overhaul period in Korneuburg from 15 December to 3 January 1942.

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17 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSW winds, force 1, cloudy, moderate visibility, slight haze, calm sea, temperature 7° C.

Air reconnaissance again revealed much shipping in the port of Sevastopol and also traffic from and to Sevastopol: at 0820 1 small merchant ship and 1 small warship in the port (incomplete view); at 1020 1 large merchant ship and 3 destroyers, course 090°, speed 18-22 knots, about 90 miles south of Malta; at 1025 1 large merchant ship, course 110°, high speed, about 95 miles south of Malta; at 1108 1 torpedoboat, 1 auxiliary warship, 1 tanker of 6,000 tons, 4 small tankers totaling 5,000 tons, and 12 small freighters in the port; at 1258 6 small ships making for Sevastopol about 8 miles west of Sevastopol.

Air reconnaissance reports did not reveal clearly whether the Russians intend evacuation or whether they are bringing further supplies to Sevastopol. The latter supposition is not out of the question for the following reasons:

1. The Russians are greatly interested in holding Sevastopol as a fleet base for operations against our supply traffic.
2. The Russian command in Sevastopol, which is known to be very energetic, might consider that the general situation on the eastern front offers a chance to launch offensive operations from Sevastopol or at least to attempt to get the front moving here also.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported some minesweepers and patrol boats in the Tuapse/Novorossisk area, 6 - 8 unidentified vessels in the Sevastopol area and 1 probable minesweeper in the area between Sochi and Poti which sent an SOS report several times to an unknown coastal radio station between 0600 and 0630.

0530 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz with 4 motor minesweepers (FR) to escort supply vessels "Zar Ferdinand", "Kolosvar", and "Kassa" to Ochakov-North.

0730 Rumanian destroyers, gunboats and torpedoboats picked up the convoy at the rendezvous point 6 miles north of point Blue 24. Nothing to report except a submarine attack on destroyer "Regole Ferdinand" at 0615 about 15 miles

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southeast of Bugaz. The attack was immediately countered with 10 depth charges which, according to a report of the Rumanian commander, destroyed the submarine. No investigation has yet been made by Rumanian Naval Command.

0910 "Krimhild" put out from Bugaz to join the 4 motor minesweepers (FR) and the convoy. The Danube Flotilla discovered a new minefield about 2 miles south of point 25. The convoy dropped anchor and the motor minesweepers (FR) cut 12 mines. One exploded in the gear, while 11 came to the surface and were detonated.

When this gap had been made in the minefield, the convoy continued passage without further incidents and anchored in the bay west of Trutaieva at 1615, from where it was to proceed to Ochakov at dawn on 18 December.

The execution of the difficult convoy assignment was a splendid achievement for which full credit must be given to the participating German and Rumanian operational staffs and naval forces.

1635 Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria" put in to Constantza.

1700 Torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul" put in to Sulina.

The minesweeping plane operated over and off Odessa harbor.

No mines swept.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

"Alzei" (Iron Gates group) temporarily non-operational because of a break in her water pump plunger.

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18 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 2, almost completely overcast, good visibility, slight sea, temperature 6° C.

Air reconnaissance reported from Sevastopol: at 0835 5 - 8 medium ships in the harbor (incomplete view); at 0841 2 small freighters with 5 boats and 1 medium freighter, course east, 2 miles west of Sevastopol and 1 small freighter, course west, 2 miles northwest of Sevastopol; at 1033 1 tanker of 6,000 tons and 5 large boats in the north bay; at 1110 1 old battleship with 30 guns (camouflaged) in the harbor.

That report was checked, as according to previous reports the old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna" was presumed to be in the eastern Black Sea.

According to another report, a plane sighted a large oil patch about 22.5 miles eastsoutheast of Cape Sabla. It may have been caused by a submarine which ran into the anti-submarine minefield laid on 7 December near Cape Sabla, was damaged and then sank during return passage.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported 3 - 4 unidentified vessels in the area west of Sevastopol in the morning (probably remote escort); also radio traffic in the east coast area between Batum and 5 vessels.

Commander, Danube Flotilla and 4 motor minesweepers (FR) escorted the 3 supply steamers to Ochakov-North, where the steamers were dismissed at 1000 to continue passage to Nikolaiev without escort. The motor minesweepers (FR) anchored in the harbor and waited for motor vessel "Tisza" which was coming from Nikolaiev to escort her back to Bugaz.

Steamer "Carpati" is still aground between points 16 and 17. Attempts to refloat the ship by reducing her cargo were continued.

0735 Seven pinnaces put out from Odessa for Bugaz to fetch mining material, buoys and fuel.
1130 They put in to Bugaz.

South Russian Area:

0910 A Russian bomber attacked Eupatoria harbor, dropping 1 bomb. No damage.

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As Kerch harbor is still within the range of the enemy guns, Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine decided to have the flotilla of fishing vessels lying in Genichesk transferred to Theodosia through Kerch Strait, as soon as ice conditions permitted departure from Genichesk. Naval Mission consented.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

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19 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, poor visibility, rain with fog, slight sea, temperature 6° C.

Air reconnaissance did not report any special observations from the area off Sevastopol apart from normal patrol activity and slight merchant shipping traffic. There were no reports on shipping in port.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported further decrease in radio traffic. Only 1 vessel was detected in the Sevastopol area. Usual number of patrol boats and escort forces off the east coast.

1220 Seven pinnaces put out from Bugaz for Odessa.

2100 In answer to a telephone inquiry, Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that the pinnaces had arrived.

South Russian Area:

Steamer "Zar Ferdinand" ran aground in the Bug estuary near Buoy 35 in the fog. Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" made a vain attempt to tow her off. Cargo is to be removed from the ship as soon as lighters are available.

1400 Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" put in to Nikolaiev from Ochakov-North.

The situation regarding steamer "Carpati" was unchanged. No more cargo was taken off today because of fog. Attempts to refloat her will be continued on 20 December.

Crimea and Sea of Azov:

At midnight the alarm was sounded in Eupatoria at the approach of enemy vessels. No landing attempts or other incidents.

The flotilla of fishing vessels in Genichesk is still held up by the ice barrier.

The training units made a check sweep in the Varna area, bearing 270° from the mole and proceeding 6 miles out to sea. The gear hooked twice and an explosive cutter exploded. Even with depth charges, no mines were swept. An unidentified object was towed for a short time towards the shore, then the gear was cut and the place marked for investigation.

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Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Situation:

1. The transport situation and the imminent new cold wave still make it necessary to speed up the transfer of as many supply steamers as possible. Upon request, Quartermaster, Rumania made motor vessels "Tisza" and "Kassa" available for the transport of 2,000 tons of coal to Nikolaiev, as steamer "Carpati" will not be ready for loading in time.
2. Plans:
 - a. Motor vessel "Tisza" is to proceed to Galatz/Braila with the utmost speed. Efforts are to be made to have her ready in Sulina to put out again on the evening of 24 December.
 - b. Transfer of "Tisza" with steamers "Oituz" and "Ardeal" to Ochakov.
 - c. Return of motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" as quickly as possible from Ochakov-North to Sulina. Sea Transportation Office, Sofia has been asked to unload them.
 - d. Transfer of steamers "Sulina", "Danubius" and "Suceava" as soon as possible depending on the ice conditions and other factors.
 - e. As we may be unable to use Nikolaiev and even Ochakov-North if the ice conditions become more severe, it is imperative that Odessa harbor be prepared immediately. Whenever possible, the Danube Flotilla and mine-exploding vessel No. 191 will be engaged on that task.

Group Command, South, Special Duties Detachment, Constantza, the Danube Flotilla and Naval Port Commander, Odessa have been instructed accordingly.

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20 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, overcast, poor visibility, slight fog, moderate sea, temperature 3° C.

Air reconnaissance transmitted numerous reports from the Sevastopol area: at 0850 6 - 8 ships in the harbor, one on fire; at 0948 3 freighters put in to the harbor; at 1125 3 miles west of Cape Feolent 3 small freighters escorted by 3 small warships, assembling; from 1120 until 1135 reports on various movements of ships, including a total of 7 merchant ships and several patrol boats close to Sevastopol; 3 warships and 1 gunboat shelled the land front 3 miles north of Sevastopol; at 1600 2 destroyers 5 miles west of Balaklava, making for the shore at high speed; 5 ships of 1,000 - 2,000 tons in the north bay at Sevastopol.

The reports indicated lively activity of the Russian fleet and merchant ships in the Sevastopol area, probably in support of the land front.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported some probable small vessels in the Sevastopol area and some probable patrol boats off the east coast.

West Coast

Special Duties Detachment reported that it is highly probable that, in addition to the submarine in the Bugaz area on 17 December (see War Diary), another enemy submarine had been sunk with depth charges by a Rumanian destroyer on 1 December off Cape Sabla after she had unsuccessfully attacked the destroyer.

South Russian Area:

More cargo was removed from steamers "Zar Ferdinand" and "Carpati" in the Bug estuary, but so far all attempts to refloat the ships have failed.

A gale warning for the west coast of the Black Sea received from the meteorological station, Constantza made it imperative to refloat the two steamers. If necessary "Tisza", which is ready to sail but whose return must be postponed on account of the weather, should be used for unloading and also motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" which have arrived in Nikolaiev and are to be unloaded as quickly as possible.

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Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria" and gunboat "Stihi" again ready for operations.

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21 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 6, overcast, rain and snow, rough sea, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance reported no shipping observed between Sevastopol and Novorossisk. In the Sevastopol area, lively activity of defense forces (including, according to some reports, 1 - 3 cruisers), patrol boats, and small to medium merchant ships was again detected. Undoubtedly these movements were in connection with the fighting on land and constitute no threat to the Rumanian or Bulgarian area. On the basis of a later report, the reported enemy landing from 5 ships 20 km. southeast of Balaklava at 1125 is considered doubtful.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported radio traffic by 1 cruiser and 2 probable destroyers in the Sevastopol area in the forenoon. According to bearings obtained, 7 vessels, including 4 of the same type, have been at sea since midnight.

South Russian Area:

Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Ochakov-North to widen the minefield gap near Achiask.

1215 The boats put in again. The gap was widened to 400 meters and an exploratory sweep was carried out as far as Trutaieva and back. No mines were swept.

Steamers "Carpati" and "Zar Ferdinand" have still not been refloated. On 22 December, the partly unloaded motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" will be sent from Nikolaiev to take more of their cargo off.

We considered whether motor vessel "Tisza", now waiting in Ochakov for return passage, should also be detained for that purpose, since the deterioration of the weather and particularly the severe ice conditions greatly endanger the two ships. However, as "Tisza" is to transport from the Danube ports the first urgently needed 1,000 tons of coal for the Naval Dockyard, Nikolaiev, I decided not to hold her.

No minesweeping activity off Varna.

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Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

"Gernot" temporarily non-operational in Orsova because of a breakdown in her generator.

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22 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 3, overcast, visibility good, moderate swell, temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance transmitted only a few reports on escort activity in the Sevastopol area (1 small cruiser, 1 destroyer and 1 torpedoboat).

Reports from the east coast revealed continuing lively activity of enemy shipping in Kerch Strait (small merchant vessels, tugs and escort vessels).

According to aerial photographs, there was again a strikingly large number of ships in Novorossisk: 1 light cruiser (covered), 3 torpedoboats, 1 auxiliary warship, 1 ice-breaker, 4 freighters totaling 18,000 tons, 7 freighters totaling 15,000 tons, 3 freighters totaling 3,000 tons, 1 wreck and 1 floating dock; another wreck off the harbor.

The greatly fluctuating number of ships in Novorossisk seems to indicate that, although seldom identified by air reconnaissance, there has been lively convoy traffic off the east coast.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported that according to radio traffic and single line bearings, 10 - 12 torpedoboats or minesweepers and patrol boats were in the Sevastopol area and off the Crimean coast. Since the afternoon of the previous day, Batum has been in radio communication with 2 cruisers. There is another cruiser or destroyer probably in the Novorossisk area.

In the course of the morning, Sevastopol sent out 2 general radiograms to a total of 12 vessels including 1 cruiser and 2 or 3 vessels of the same type.

Between 0001 and 1100, an unidentified vessel was detected in the area between Theodosia and the southern entrance to Kerch Strait.

South Russian Area:

0700 Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" put out from Nikolaiev to take more cargo off steamer "Zar Ferdinand" and attempt to refloat her.

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After 70 tons had been removed, the ship was refloated and the 3 supply steamers put in to Nikolaiev again at 1530.

We intend to send "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" out again on 23 December to take off cargo from steamer "Carpati" and attempt to refloat her. The position there is still unchanged. In view of the continuing good weather and ice conditions, "Carpati" is in no immediate danger.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

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23 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 2, no cloud, good visibility, slight sea, temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance reported from the Sevastopol area: at 0915 1 gunboat, course 320°, about 20 miles northwest of Sevastopol; at 1115 2 probable destroyers and 6 small merchant vessels off the harbor; at 1245 2 cruisers and 1 floating dock in the harbor (incomplete view).

1245 30th Army Corps reported 4 freighters headed for Sevastopol. According to air reconnaissance, no enemy shipping traffic was observed between Sevastopol and the Caucasus ports despite diverging sea reconnaissance.

Tuapse: 2 heavy cruisers, 1 destroyer, 2 small warships, 1 freighter of 10,000 - 12,000 tons and 15 patrol boats or fishing vessels.

Novorossisk: 1 probable large cruiser, 3 destroyers, 4 torpedoboats and 15 small freighters totaling 1,500 - 2,000 tons.

Very lively activity of small freighters and boats again in Kerch Strait, where altogether 27 small freighters were sighted, some in the bordering bays and small harbors. Also usual patrol forces.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported further lively radio traffic. Sevastopol maintained contact by day and by night with at least 12 vessels including 6 destroyers or cruisers. One unidentified shore radio station and Batum also contacted 2 cruisers and destroyers by radio. Minesweepers and patrol boats were identified in the Sevastopol area and off the south coast of the Crimea as far as Anapa. In addition, radio traffic was heard from 3 submarines, of which at least one was in the Constantza-Burgas area.

One probable patrol boat was detected about 60 miles south of Cape Khersonese.

0630 "Krimhild" put out from Ochakov-North with 4 motor minesweepers (FR) to provide return escort for motor vessel "Tisza". Commander, Danube Flotilla was aboard FR 2.

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1110 Torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul" put out from Sulina to the north to pick up motor vessel "Tisza".

1610 "Krimhild" put in to Bugaz.

1740 At 1740 the motor minesweepers (FR) handed over the escort of "Tisza" to the 2 Rumanian torpedoboats about 4 miles eastsoutheast of Bugaz as scheduled.

The motor minesweepers (FR) cut and blasted another mine in the gap in the minefield discovered southeast of point 25 on 17 December. Nothing further to report.

Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" removed more cargo from "Carpati" in the Bug estuary. We hope to refloat the steamer on 24 December.

0830 Three naval ferry barges put out from Varna for Constantza, escorted by 2 E-boats as far as the Bulgarian/Rumanian border. Special Duties Detachment carried out a check sweep in Varna Bay as far as Kaliakra without result.

1700 Three naval ferry barges put in to Constantza from Varna.

2030 Steamers "Ardeal" and "Oituz" put out for Constantza escorted by 3 Bulgarian torpedoboats and 2 E-boats.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

"Uta" again ready for operations.

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24 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

WNW winds, force 3, fair, good visibility,
calm sea, temperature -2^o C.

Air reconnaissance reported from the Sevastopol area: at 0740 3 torpedoboats and 3 large merchant ships totaling more than 8,000 tons putting in; at 0755 1 light cruiser and 1 torpedoboat off the entrance; at 0806 2 destroyers putting in; at 0910 1 freighter of 3,000 - 4,000 tons (no further details); at 0930 near Unshkuievo headland 1 destroyer shelling the land front; at 1550 8 small freighters about 2 miles west of Sevastopol.

It may be taken as certain that the strongly protected convoy comprising 3 large merchant vessels brought up further supplies or troops, and that the enemy apparently intends to defend Sevastopol as long as possible.

From the east coast there was only a report of vessels in Novorossisk harbor: 1 freighter of 6,500 tons, 30 boats and 2 floating docks; 13 boats off the harbor.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported that radio traffic had decreased in the course of the afternoon.

According to the D/F station, there were only small craft in the Sevastopol area. Novorossisk was in radio communication with 3 cruisers or destroyers and radio traffic was also heard between 2 submarines and 1 unidentified radio station. What were presumed to be the same submarines were also detected by D/F in the following areas:

- 0420 1 submarine near Burgas-Ochi (continuous bearing).
- 0500 1 submarine about 60 miles off Constantza (cross bearing).
- 0200 Motor vessel "Tisza" put in to Sulina from Ochakov escorted by torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul". The two torpedoboats continued to Constantza.
- 0615 Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" and gunboat "Stihi" put out from Constantza to the south to pick up supply ships "Oituz" and "Ardcal" from Varna.

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0850 Torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul" put in to Constantza again after escorting "Tisza".

South Russian Area:

Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that Odessa harbor will be ready to receive 1 - 3 steamers before New Year, should another check sweep by minesweeping planes be without result. However, before the harbor is opened, it will be necessary to have mine-exploding vessel No. 191 carry out further check sweeps. She is delayed in Galatz because of the difficulty of procuring spare parts for her repairs.

0800 After further unloading by motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar", steamer "Carpati" was refloated; she put in to Nikolaiev without further incident at 1215.

Bulgarian Area:

0800 Two boats of Special Duties Detachment put out from Varna to escort motor vessel "Rila" and motor sailing vessel "Marianne" as far as Kaliakra. Both ships continued to Constantza.

General:

1. Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army E.Q. inquired whether it would be possible to send motor minesweepers (FR) or other armed vessels into action to protect the particularly vulnerable northwest coast of the Crimea and the Perekop isthmus. I informed 11th Army E.Q. that this was impossible for the following reasons:
 - a. The motor minesweepers (FR) are materially unsuitable for the proposed operation.
 - b. They will be fully engaged on the mine-sweeping assignments on which all supply traffic is decisively dependent. Mine-sweeping has already been considerably delayed by the shortage of escort vessels and minesweeping craft.
2. To support Naval Shore Commander "U", I propose to transfer Naval Shore Commander "V" to the Crimea as soon as he is ready to proceed. Naval Shore Commander "V" and his personnel are now in Jassy. The motor vehicles and drivers have not yet arrived from Germany. Naval Shore Commander "V" will not be ready to leave until 10 January 1942 at the earliest.

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Naval Shore Commander "U" was asked to submit proposals immediately as to the choice of operational bases and the desired strength of personnel.

Readiness:

Torpedoboat "Sborul" temporarily non-operational to undergo repairs to her screws.

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25 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSW winds, force 3, overcast, good visibility,
calm sea, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance did not transmit any
reports from the Sevastopol area. Only
the following sighting report was received
from the east coast:

Ghelenjik at 1330: 4 medium and 4 small
freighters.

Anapa: 1 medium and 8 small freighters.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea
reported 8 - 10 vessels (cruisers or
destroyers) at sea, 5 of them presumably in
the Novorossisk area, 2 in the Batum area
and 1 in the Sevastopol area.

Patrol boats and escort forces continued to
be active between Tuapse and the southern
entrance to Kerch Strait. In addition,
2 submarines maintained radio contact with
Sevastopol in the afternoon.

0820 Two naval ferry barges put out from Constantza
for Varna to have the damage caused during
transfer from Varna to Constantza repaired.

1120 Motor sailing vessel "Marianne" put in to
Constantza from Varna. She had been
transferred from the Aegean Sea and was to
be sent into action when operations started
in the south Russian area.

1520 The 2 naval ferry barges from Constantza
could not continue passage to Varna on
account of the strong southwesterly storm;
they anchored under cover of the coast about
1 mile north of Kaliakra, 300 meters offshore.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Plans:

1. Transfer of tanker "Albaro" from Varna
to Constantza (very urgent, as the ship is
to take in oil for the Aegean in Constantza)
and steamer "Sulina" from Burgas to Constantza.
"Sulina" has already taken in 1,000 tons of
coal for Naval Dockyard, Nikolaiev and is to
collect the rest of her cargo in Constantza.

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2. The next convoy assignment is to be carried out as soon as weather permits. In accordance with the agreement made with Quartermaster, Rumania, the following craft will be transferred: steamers "Oituz" and "Ardeal" and motor vessel "Tisza", if she can take in the 1,000 tons of coal destined for Naval Dockyard, Nikolaiev in time, otherwise steamer "Sulina", if the rest of her cargo is loaded in Constantza by the day of departure.
3. If there is time, the new minefield discovered on 17 December 2 miles south of point 25 is to be examined.

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26 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 5, overcast, good visibility, slight sea, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance repeatedly reported very lively shipping traffic (mostly small freighters and boats) proceeding to the north and south-east coast of the Kerch headland, which the enemy attacked on the night of 26/27 December. The most important details were: at 0915 1 small warship and 13 freighters, course south, off Cape Chroni; at 1045 3 small merchant vessels off Chegene attempting to land; at 1107 3 medium transports anchored in the bay west of Cape Chroni; at 1200 1 convoy (1 medium and 2 small freighters), course west, and 8 boats 15 miles northeast of Kerch; at 1225 1 cruiser and 5 - 6 probable destroyers shelling the coast near Cape Sudak; 5 transports of 2,000 - 3,000 tons, and about 20 small vessels off Cape Tuszla; 1 cruiser and 7 small transports off Cape Chroni; at 1334 2 light cruisers and 1 destroyer, course north, 10 miles southwest of Cape Takil; at 1543 about 15 ships, including transports of 2,000 - 3,000 tons, course west, north of Cape Sjuk; at 1410 2 torpedoboats, 1 freighter and 2 boats, course 230°, northeast of Cape Chroni; 5 small freighters and 6 boats, course south, off Chegene and 2 small freighters close to the shore; at 1430 5 small freighters and 6 boats landing troops about 14 miles west of Cape Chroni.

(For enemy landing operations on the Crimean headland, see "South Russian Area".)

There were only 2 reports from the Sevastopol area: at 1255 1 torpedoboat, course west, medium speed, off Cape Khersonese, and 10 small merchant ships off and in Sevastopol harbor (incomplete view).

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported that the vessels detected at sea yesterday (cruisers or destroyers) were still mainly in the Novorossisk-Kerch Strait area. An unidentified radio station was also in contact with 3 destroyers and 1 cruiser. The 2 submarines reported on the last two days were still at sea and were in radio communication with Sevastopol.

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On account of the weather (NW winds, force 4 - 5), the Danube Flotilla cannot put out from Buzak for the intended sweeping of the mine-field south of point 25.

South Russian Area:

During the night and the forenoon, Russian troops landed at several places on the Kerch headland (see air reconnaissance report). As far as can be seen, the enemy landed at 7 places in numbers varying from a company to a battalion and established bridgeheads. According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., tanks were also landed. 11th Army H.Q. and the Air Force immediately took countermeasures. Communication with Naval Communications Officer, Kerch was temporarily interrupted. A report from Naval Port Commander, Theodosia received during the evening revealed that the Naval Communications Officer had dismantled the radio station and taken part in the defense of the northern part of the town.

Sailing of our flotilla of fishing vessels from Genichesk to Kerch Strait was canceled.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Dumitrescu" again ready for operations.

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27 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNW winds, force 4, fair, very good
visibility, moderate sea, temperature -7° C.

Air reconnaissance again transmitted many reports on shipping traffic in the Kerch area. The following were the most important:
at 0950 3 small warships, stopped, 8 miles northwest of Kerch; at 0955 1 small warship and 3 small freighters in Kerch Strait;
at 1025 30 merchant vessels anchored 7 miles north of Taman; at 1045 about 30 ships (5 of them transports of 6,000 - 7,000 tons each) north of Taman; 1 transport of 6,000 tons putting out from Kerch. (Tonnage of ships must in some cases be incorrect, as the depth of water at several places would not allow employment of such large ships.)
At 1050 2 small freighters and 1 boat, course west, were detected about 12 miles northeast of Kerch; at 1130 9 medium warships, apparently stopped, 20 miles north of Cape Takil; at 1310 4 small merchant ships and 1 boat, course east, eastnortheast of Kerch; at 1315 1 destroyer and 3 medium freighters, course west, north of Cape Achilleon; at 1425 11 medium merchant ships 5 miles south of Anapa.

Only one report was received from 11th Army H.Q. (Naval Liaison Officer). According to this, the situation in the Kerch area has been consolidated despite another Russian landing. The attack on Sevastopol has been temporarily abandoned.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported on the basis of radio traffic and single line bearings that the fleet activity was continuing in the area off Novorossisk, in the southern part of the Sea of Azov and off the southern tip of the Crimea, probably concentrating east of the Crimea. Two or three cruisers and several destroyers, as well as minesweepers, patrol boats and guardboats were detected. Another cruiser or destroyer was identified in the area off Tuapse, while some minesweepers and patrol boats were observed off the southern tip of the Crimea. Normal activity of coastal vessels in the area between Poti and Batum. In the evening, a submarine maintained radio communication with Poti; she was probably in that area.

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The Danube Flotilla did not put out from Bugaz because of the weather.

Odessa: Operations by the minesweeping plane today and the operation on 25 December which was not reported until today were without result.

No mines were swept in the course of a check sweep by Special Duties Detachment in the northern part of Varna Bay.

Readiness:

Dockyard period scheduled for "Bechelaren" from 18 December 1941 to 30 March 1942.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSW winds, force 1, fair, very good
visibility, calm sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance reported very lively
activity of warships and transports in the
Sevastopol area. Details were as follows:
at 0845 13 laden freighters putting out from
the harbor; at 0944 1 destroyer and 3 merchant
vessels, stopped, off the harbor; at 1215
6 freighters putting in.

Only a few reports were received today from
Kerch Strait. Convoy traffic in that area
is still lively. Several large convoys or
assemblies of transports were observed close
to the coast. As many as 20 ships were
detected. Novorossisk (aerial photograph):
1 light cruiser (covered), 2 auxiliary
warships and 17 freighters totaling about
52,000 tons.

The large number of ships seems to indicate
that the Russians have brought up considerable
reinforcements from the south Caucasus harbors
for the operation against the Kerch headland.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea
reported 2 cruisers at sea and further vessels
(including cruisers and destroyers) in the Poti
area. Ten to twelve minesweepers and patrol
boats were in radio communication with
Sevastopol.

Seven patrol boats and 1 submarine were
detected in the Novorossisk area. Radio
traffic decreased generally.

0800 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz
with 4 motor minesweepers (FR) to enlarge the
gap in the minefield south of point 25.

0820 Commander, Danube Flotilla reported by Most
Immediate radiogram that 10 suspicious clouds
of smoke had been sighted in the direction of
Odessa, course presumably northeast. As the
Rumanian air reconnaissance which took off
immediately did not sight any ships, probably
the reported smoke clouds were a deceptive
maneuver.

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- 0845 Four motor minesweepers (FR) put in to Bugaz again because of the rough sea.
- 0920 The Italian tanker "Labaro", which was proceeding from Varna escorted by destroyer "Regina Maria", torpedoboat "Sborul" and gunboat "Chiculescu" which had been sent out to meet her, put in to Constantza. Three Bulgarian E-boats which had put out to escort the tanker from Varna also put in to Constantza, as they could not return immediately because of the ice.

South Russian Area:

Naval Liaison Officer reported that the enemy troops in the area south of Kerch had been destroyed and that the destruction of the enemy forces which had landed in the Cape Chroni-Cape Sjuk area was in full progress. Our reinforcements have arrived from the west.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates area.

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29 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

WNE winds, force 7, overcast, snow with fog, visibility up to 1 km., rough sea, temperature -6°C.

Air reconnaissance reported 6 - 8 large freighters in the western part of Sevastopol Bay at 0730; at 1310 1 warship and 14 medium and small freighters 2½ miles west of the harbor.

In the Theodosia area, air reconnaissance detected very lively activity of warships and merchant vessels in connection with the enemy landing operation. Various heavy and light cruisers, destroyers and torpedoboats and also several convoys of up to 7 transports were observed.

From 1044 to 1104, planes reported that several warships, some of which were at the jetty, shelled the town, particularly the harbor area.

Compared with previous days, merchant shipping and escort traffic in the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait had considerably decreased; however, several small convoys, comprising up to 4 freighters, and large assemblies of boats were still reported.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported several cruisers operating off the east and southeast coast of the Crimea. Several torpedoboats, minesweepers and M.T.B.s are also at sea south of the line from Theodosia to the southern entrance to Kerch Strait to Anapa. Slight activity of patrol forces off the east coast.

The Danube Flotilla did not put out from Bugaz on account of the weather.

South Russian Area:

Ice conditions have so considerably deteriorated that passage of the next convoy to Nikolaiev appears hardly possible. Naval Shore Commander "U" was ordered to report continuously on ice conditions. The success of the attempt to bring the convoy at least as far as Ochakov will greatly depend on these reports.

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- 0300 According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., the Russians landed in Theodosia from 1 cruiser and 2 torpedoboats at 0300. The town is already in Russian hands (see contradictory report from air reconnaissance).
- 0700 Further landings were carried out near Sarigolsk and Kamishi (northeast of Theodosia). The naval radio station was abandoned undestroyed after the secret material had been burnt.
- 0730 Troops made further landings 2 miles north of Theodosia.
- 1810 Naval Shore Commander "U" reported by radiogram 1452/39 that, according to a report from Naval Port Commander, Kerch, Kerch Peninsula had been evacuated as far as Theodosia. Naval Shore Commander "U" ordered Naval Port Commander, Kerch to transfer to Simferopol or Shankov.
- 2350 Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported by radiogram 2114/39 that fighting was going on in Theodosia, further landings had been made and Naval Port Commander, Theodosia had been killed in action.

After discussion with Group South, I decided that Naval Shore Commander "V" should transfer as quickly as possible from his present headquarters in Jassy to the Crimea to be at the disposal of Naval Shore Commander "U". He was to reinforce the coastal defenses in accordance with instructions of Naval Shore Commander "U" who had orders to cooperate with 11th Army H.Q. and to take all necessary measures for operations etc. immediately. Naval Shore Commander "V" will be temporarily subordinated to Naval Shore Commander "U" during this emergency.

Group Commander, Iron Gates reported that ice conditions had deteriorated and that it was necessary to transfer "Gernot" to Russe immediately with "Alzei", which would have to be taken in tow owing to a breakdown in her engines.

Group Commander received the necessary orders and the German Commanding General, Serbia was informed.

CONFIDENTIAL

30 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

Winds, force 3, no cloud, slight haze,
visibility up to 4 km., moderate sea,
temperature -14° C.

Air reconnaissance reported from the Theodosia area that the lively traffic of warships, transports etc. was continuing. Details were as follows: at 1710 3 medium freighters unloading at the pier and 1 heavy cruiser and 1 destroyer off the harbor; at 1300 1 light cruiser and 2 guardboats off the harbor; at 1400 4 destroyers in line ahead, slow speed, about 15 miles east of Theodosia, heading for the harbor; at 2115 1 heavy cruiser, 1 torpedo boat and 1 medium freighter anchored off the harbor.

No special reconnaissance reports were received from Kerch Strait or the east coast.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported further lively shipping traffic in the area between the southeast coast of the Crimea and Novorossisk. The following were detected: 1 large vessel, 1 cruiser, 1 destroyer and several patrol boats probably between Anapa and Novorossisk and several escort vessels between Sevastopol and the east coast of the Crimea.

The Danube Flotilla did not put out from Bugaz on account of the weather.

1100 The Bulgarian steamer "Rila" put out from Constantza for Varna escorted by 3 Bulgarian E-boats.

The convoy assignment scheduled for today (steamers "Ardeal", "Cituz" and motor vessel "Budapest") must be canceled as Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine has failed to transmit the requested detailed report on ice conditions in the Bug and off Ochakov in time. It is also impossible to divert the ships to Odessa, because, although permission has been urgently requested several times since 28 December, Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea has not yet consented to ships putting in to Odessa in emergency to unload. In view of the deterioration of ice conditions, this inexplicable delay is very regrettable and may mean that the supply ships cannot even make for Odessa.

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South Russian Area:

Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that, between 1440 and 1445 on 29 December, 4 water columns had been observed and 3 detonations heard 1 mile east of the quarantine jetty at Odessa. They were probably caused by time mines. However, they might also have been shallow-set moored mines which exploded when the ice broke up. It will now be necessary to have supply steamers putting in to Odessa escorted by the Danube Flotilla.

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that the motor boats on patrol off Ak Mechet and Eupatoria had to abandon operation on account of the high swell. The flotilla of fishing vessels in Genichesk is still held up by ice.

According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., Theodosia is still occupied by the enemy who have made a thrust to the west with 6 tanks. Our own infantry are not yet in action, but a counter-attack is in preparation.

Our troops have disengaged along the whole front on Kerch Peninsula and are moving quickly to the west. Nothing is known at 11th Army H.Q. of the whereabouts of Naval Command, Kerch.

The air/sea rescue squadron had to be transferred from Mamaia to Constantza because of freezing at the naval air base. Possibilities for operating from Constantza are very limited.

1200 "Gernot" left the Iron Gates to proceed to Russe with "Alzei" in tow.

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31 December, 1941

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, no cloud, slight haze, visibility up to 6 km., calm sea, temperature -16° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following from the Theodosia area: at 0930 3 medium merchant ships and 1 destroyer in the harbor; at 1340 3 medium freighters, 6 boats and 1 destroyer, stopped, and 1 medium freighter, course east, high speed, all 4 miles east of Theodosia; at 1400 2 destroyers, 2 guardboats and 1 small merchant vessel, stopped, off the harbor; at 1000 3 medium and 5 small freighters, 1 tanker and 1 probable destroyer in the northern part of Sevastopol Bay (incomplete view).

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported numerous naval forces between the east coast of the Crimca and Novorossisk.

One large vessel, 2 cruisers and 3 destroyers maintained radio communication with Sevastopol, while another cruiser was detected in the direction of Tuapse. In the Crimcan coast area and off the northeast coast of the Black Sea, there was normal traffic of minesweepers and patrol boats.

0800 Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Bugaz to sweep the Ilichevka minefield.

1600 They put in again without sweeping any mines. The gap in the minefield was marked again as all the marker buoys but one had drifted away.

The Rumanian tug "Stoicescu" which had put out from Constantza on 28 December for a listening sweep against enemy submarines has been missing since that time and must be considered lost.

South Russian Area:

Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that, between 1130 and 1440 on 30 December, 3 detonations similar to those on the previous day had been observed at the same spot (see War Diary 30 December).

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Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that supply steamers could be directed to Ochakov-North, but that the lighters available there were inadequate and damaged. Accordingly, it is impossible to have the supply steamers proceed further than Odessa. No word was received from Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea today regarding the transfer of the supply steamers to Odessa. The convoy assignment must therefore again be postponed for another day.

Group Command, South asked whether it would be possible to have the large Rumanian destroyers lay protective minefields off the west coast of the Crimea to disrupt any possible enemy landing attempts.

In view of the state of the destroyers and their degree of training and as they are badly needed for escort assignments, Group Command was informed that the engagement of the destroyers for that purpose was out of the question, as the results achieved by these operations would by no means justify the great risk involved.

No further news of the fighting on Kerch headland was received today.

Naval Port Commander, Theodosia - reported killed in action on 30 December - arrived in Sarabus (11th Army H.Q.). Commander Wibalg (Economic Command, Russia) was killed in action during the fighting in Sevastopol.

1800 "Gernot" put in to Russe from Orsova.
1920 Delayed by further intensification of the ice situation, "Alzei" put in to Russe.

(Signed) Fleischcr.

APPENDIX I

Night Attack on Naval Port Command, Eupatoria

on 15/16 December, 1941

At 2300 on 15 December when the watch was being changed, the guards of Naval Port Command heard and reported noises of engines (sailors Franz Preilowski and Horst Krüger and drivers Herbert Mayer and Ernst Falter).

2310 Alarm sounded in Naval Port Command

The command was reinforced as scheduled by the motor repair group and individual drivers at the main gate and by the special commanders Lieutenant S. Hacker (Naval Artillery) and Lieutenant Schmalz with one man (Sea Transportation Office) at the command post on the beach. Telephones were out of order, probably due to partisan action. Transmission of orders by messenger was arranged. Naval Port Commander sighted the silhouettes of 2 vessels similar to the vessel sighted on 6 December.

2320 Alarm sounded in Eupatoria

This was done by firing 3 red stars as planned. The guards opened fire at both vessels. Range about 200 meters. Evidently the Russians were surprised; they put up a very fierce machine-gunfire bombardment with tracer ammunition directed at the site and Naval Port Command. A messenger was sent to the local headquarters to ask for reinforcements. Soon afterwards Lieutenant Willeck arrived with 12 men from the Military Police Detachment and Captain Brander followed from the local headquarters. The Russian ships turned out to sea at high speed, course south, and disappeared.

An officer patrol with machine-guns (Lieutenant Wesch, Leading Seaman Schulz, Sailors Kullmann, Krüger, Joopen, Seamen Schultz and Mogow) was sent to the harbor bridge with orders to establish themselves there for defense. The patrol searched the beach until 2355 when both M.T.B.s approached the bridgehead of Naval Port Command at slow speed, sometimes drifting, and firing several green and white stars simultaneously. Both boats were watched attentively: the left boat by Leading Seaman Fester, the right one by Naval Port Commander and his group. The boats soon abandoned their attempt at landing, as they apparently realized that it was impossible at this place. They turned off towards the bay at slow speed and approached harbor bridge I. From there they again opened fire, this time at Naval Port Command, the shore, beach and bridges. Lieutenant Wesch took up position with his machine-gun, protected the bay from landing

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attempts, and advanced to the bridge when the fire abated. There he occupied the harbor bridge. He observed 2 small vessels at a range of about 1,000 meters, and 1 large vessel, probably a destroyer, at a considerable distance. The command post of Naval Port Command sent a messenger to ask the Army Coastal Artillery to protect the piers. Barrage fire started with 9 rounds between 0001 and 0030. Between 0020 and 0025 the boats disappeared.

Both boats then slowly approached the bridge of Naval Port Command again, drifted slowly near it, then took reverse course, fired a white starshell and definitely abandoned their intention of landing. The readiness of our troops had made it impossible. At the end, the boats again fired their machine-guns fiercely and probably also 7.6 cm. guns. The water tower near Naval Port Command and harbor bridge 1 were hit. Direct hit on the warehouse. No great damage and no casualties. The entire beach was strafed by machine-gunfire.

0035 The boats withdrew at high speed.

0200 Normal readiness with reinforced guard.

0242 Teletype report was sent to 11th Army H.Q.

(Signed) Von Richthofen.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 JANUARY, 1942

PG/31502

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1 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 2, no cloud, good visibility, slight coastal haze, slight sea, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance transmitted only a few reports on naval forces and shipping traffic between the Crimea and the east coast: at 1045 1 light cruiser about 12 miles south of Theodosia and 1 destroyer about 7 miles south of Theodosia; at 1415 1 large warship, 1 destroyer, 1 torpedoboat and 1 boat lying stopped in Theodosia harbor and at 1432 2 freighters of 3,000 - 4,000 tons and 1 freighter of 1,000 - 2,000 tons putting out from the harbor; several small freighters at the quay; at 0950 5 small freighters, course 160°, slight speed, and 1 torpedoboat 10 miles west of Sevastopol.

East coast: at 1000 2 large and 4 small boats ice-bound 10 miles northwest of Tamanskaya, 4 small freighters ice-bound in the harbor; at 1220 1 freighter of 8,000 tons and 1 torpedoboat, course 300°, high speed, 40 miles west of Tuapse; at 1234 1 transport of 4,000 - 5,000 tons and 2 transports of 2,000 - 3,000 tons, course southeast, in Arabatzkaya Bay.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported 1 cruiser, 2 or 3 destroyers and some small vessels east of the Crimea. One probable cruiser, 2 - 3 destroyers and some patrol vessels were detected off Sevastopol and south of the Crimea. One larger vessel was intercepted in the Batum area. At 1240 1 submarine, probably coming from the east, was intercepted in the area near the southern tip of the Crimea and Tuapse.

Situation and Plans:

During the night of 31 December/1 January, I received a message from Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea that, despite the continued lack of forces for unloading and transportation purposes, he agreed that the next convoy should be brought to Odessa if ice conditions should prevent passage to Nikolaiev or Ochakov.

Rumanian Naval Command is charged with the execution of the convoy tasks. For this purpose, the Danube Flotilla will be subordinate to the Rumanian Command.

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Because mine-exploding vessel No. 191 is not yet ready for action, Rumanian Naval Command has at my request supplied a tug of type "Amsel" equipped with towed loop gear to check Odessa harbor for mines.

General Zander, Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force, reported that, since the last 4 aerial minesweeping operations over the Odessa approaches and harbor had brought no results after 13 hours, further search seemed useless. The minesweeping plane will however check the roads and harbor entrance for new submarine mines one day before convoys put in and out.

0800

Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Bugaz to widen the minefield gap south of point 25. They put in again at 1015 because of engine trouble in one of the boats. It was repaired in the harbor.

South Russian Area:

Nikolaiev: No incidents.

According to the latest reports, ice conditions in the harbor area and in the Bug have deteriorated further.

Ice conditions in Genichesk unchanged. It is impossible for the fishing vessel flotilla to put out. Due to the changed situation at Kerch and Theodosia, passage to harbors further south is temporarily impossible.

Crimea:

4th Air Corps reported from Theodosia that the aerial minelaying operation was started today. Details will be reported later.

All Danube shipping traffic had to be stopped on account of ice conditions at the Iron Gates.

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2 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 4, cloudy, snow with fog, visibility 2 km., slight sea, temperature -9° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 light cruiser, 1 medium freighter and 5 small freighters at anchor at 1245 off Sevastopol harbor and 2 small vessels riding at anchor 4 miles west of Balaklava.

No further reports on naval vessels and transport traffic in the Crimean area and between the Crimea and the east coast.

East coast: at 1255 1 submarine lying stopped, 1 M.T.B., course 290°, high speed, off Novorossisk; at 1355 3 naval vessels, 3 medium freighters, 3 small freighters and 1 floating dock in Novorossisk harbor; at 1420 1 medium armed freighter (about 2,500 tons), course 290°, medium speed, 15 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 1420 2 freighters of about 5,000 tons, 5 freighters of 2,000 tons, 10 small vessels, 1 naval vessel and 1 submarine in Tuapse.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported 2 cruisers, 5 - 6 destroyers and several patrol boats between the Crimea and Novorossisk. There were also 3 - 4 submarines at sea, two of which were intercepted at 2130 between Burgas and the Bosphorus; the others were presumably off the northeast coast.

0800

Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Bugaz to sweep the minefield gap south of point 25. They had to put in again at 1000 on account of the weather. No mines swept. Some marker buoys were replaced.

South Russian Area:

Nikolaiev-Ochakov: No incidents. Ice conditions even worse.

The convoy due to put out from Constantza and Sulina to Odessa on 3 January had to be postponed for 24 hours on account of the weather.

Crimea:

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that Lieutenant Commander Beer, Naval Port Commander, Theodosia had arrived in Simferopol

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with 1 officer and 29 men and is now ready for a new commission. According to statements made up to now, 3 men have been killed in Theodosia and 8 are missing. The rest of Naval Port Commander's men are still in action with Army troops. There is still no information on Naval Port Commander, Kerch who, according to his last report, planned to go to Djanko.

Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Corps reported that aerial minelaying had begun in Theodosia today.

Danube:

Ice conditions on the lower Danube are worse. Towing traffic above Galatz has already been stopped. Drift ice below Galatz.

Readiness:

U-boat "Delfinul" probably non-operational until the end of January.

"Proteus" and "Lykurgos" probably ready for operations by the middle of January.

1 Bulgarian torpedoboat will be non-operational for about 14 days.

1 Bulgarian E-boat non-operational until further notice.

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3 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

WNW winds, force 4, no cloud, good visibility, slight coastal haze, rough sea, temperature -15° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following vessels: Sevastopol at 1245: 1 light cruiser and 6 small to medium freighters at anchor off the harbor. Theodosia at 0830 (aerial photograph): 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons; at 1430 1 medium freighter putting in. Novorossisk at 1000: 1 battleship, 1 probable heavy cruiser, 1 destroyer, 1 covered cruiser (new construction), 5 freighters totaling 12,000 tons, 60 small freighters and boats and 2 docks. Tuapse at 0930: 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light cruiser, 4 torpedoboats, 7 submarines, 1 tanker of 6,000 - 8,000 tons, 8 freighters totaling about 30,000 tons and 15 small vessels.

The many vessels in Tuapse suggest that the Russians must have recently expanded this harbor very quickly.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported movements of light naval forces between the south coast of the Crimea and Tuapse: 4 destroyers and some patrol boats between Sevastopol and Theodosia; 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers and several patrol boats between Theodosia and Novorossisk; 1 cruiser in Tuapse.

One submarine was intercepted east of Yalta at 1032 and another between Burgas and the Bosphorus at 1310.

1130 Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Bugaz to widen the minefield gap south of point 25. At sea they encountered large masses of soft floating ice, but it did not impede the minesweeping activity. 14 mines were cleared from the area where no mines had been found during the exploratory sweep on 23 December, 1941. One mine exploded in the gear and 3 others were exploded by gunfire. In the opinion of Commander, Danube Flotilla they were pearl mines.

1600 The 4 motor minesweepers (FR) put in to Bugaz again.

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Situation and Plans:

On account of the unfavorable weather and the unknown ice conditions in the Odessa area, the convoy assignment has had to be postponed for 24 hours. Since the Danube Flotilla reported that ice conditions presented no obstruction in the open sea, an exploratory sweep has been ordered, if possible as far as Odessa harbor. On the basis of the results gained in this operation, I shall decide whether convoys can run or not.

South Russian Area:

Nikolaiev - Ochakov: No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Port Commander, Eupatoria reported that all landing stages were blown up by Army engineers on 1 and 2 January. Emergency reconstruction of the main landing stage will take 14 days. Four army coastal guns have been installed since 2 January to reinforce the coastal defenses. Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. transmitted an urgent request from Commanding General, 11th Army for immediate mining of Yalta harbor by naval forces.

Naval Liaison Officer vainly tried to convince 11th Army that it was impossible to carry out this operation in time. He reported that suitable vessels would first have to be equipped for minelaying in Yalta.

After an exhaustive discussion with Naval Group Command, South, 11th Army H.Q. was informed that the minelaying operation could not be carried out owing to lack of naval forces and mine-carriers.

Lower Danube:

Ice conditions in the Danube have become considerably worse in the last 24 hours. Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 was ordered to sail immediately to Sulina to prevent her from becoming ice-bound in Galatz, from where she would be unable to operate until spring. She will later dock in Constantza.

Readiness:

"Romulus" is again ready for operations.

One Bulgarian minesweeper non-operational on account of engine trouble. Duration of repairs uncertain.

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4 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, no cloud, visibility 10 km., slight coastal haze, smooth sea, temperature -13° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 large and 2 small freighters in the Theodosia area at 1150; 1 destroyer off Theodosia harbor entrance; from 1100 until 1120 2 heavy cruisers, 2 freighters of 2,000 tons and 1 torpedo boat, course 270°, about 35 miles eastsoutheast of Theodosia; 1 battleship (?), course southeast, slight speed, about 20 miles southeast of Theodosia; at 1210 1 medium ship and 1 destroyer about 30 miles east of Theodosia.

Theodosia at 1300 (aerial photograph):
1 freighter of about 6,000 tons, apparently burnt out, 1 freighter of 3,500 tons, apparently burning in the bow, 3 more freighters, each about 2,000 tons (1 with bow on fire), about 14 boats and 1 floating crane.

As Kerch Strait is frozen, shipping traffic has been stopped.

No traffic was observed off the east coast.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported 3 cruisers, 5 destroyers and several small vessels at sea. A bearing obtained on 1 cruiser showed her to be in the Sevastopol area, while 1 destroyer was in the Ghelenjik area. One submarine was located about 56 miles northwest of Zonguldak in the forenoon and another off the east coast of the Crimea at noon. Activity of patrol vessels was unchanged.

0700 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz with 4 motor minesweepers (FR) for an exploratory sweep to the north as far as Odessa harbor entrance.

0750 Commander, Danube Flotilla reported that ice conditions had become worse since yesterday. Even in the open sea large fields of solid ice were met (5 cm. thick), although vessels could still proceed.

0930 The 4 motor minesweepers (FR) put in again. They had to discontinue the exploratory sweep to Odessa on account of the ice. Solid ice north of point 25 as far as could be seen, in places as thick as 15 cm. It was no longer

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possible to put out gear.

From this report it is obviously impossible to run further convoys until ice conditions improve. Naval Group Command, South and Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea were informed. Commander, Danube Flotilla was ordered to make for Constantza with the motor minesweepers (FR) and "Krimhild". Sulina is out of the question on account of ice conditions in the Danube and in any case there are no repair facilities there.

Lower Danube:

0145 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put out from Galatz for Sulina towed by "Romulus".

1610 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put in to Sulina and "Romulus" returned to Galatz.

According to a report received today from Rumanian Naval Command, enemy planes flew over Sulina about 0130 during the night of 2/3 January. No details available. Confirmation pending.

Ice conditions in the lower Danube have become still worse.

South Russian Area:

Naval Port Commander, Eupatoria constructed barricades for the protection of the harbor and town.

14 prisoners (probably airborne troops) were taken near Ak Mechet. According to a report from Naval Shore Commander "U", the personnel of Naval Port Command, Kerch and Lieutenant Commander Basarke (on special mission with the fishing vessel flotilla in the Sea of Azov) are in Kherson.

Readiness:

With the exception of 2 experimental ferry barges, the 11 naval ferry barges in Constantza will be non-operational until further notice, as they cannot be used during frost.

Situation:

1. As convoys cannot proceed to Odessa on account of ice conditions, transportation of supplies by sea route has been stopped for the present.
2. For the following reasons it is not possible

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to transfer sea supplies to the Crimea:

- a. The original plan was to transfer the Danube Flotilla to Ak Mechet or Eupatoria to create a mine-free route along the Crimean coast. This is no longer possible because of ice conditions off the coast. Direct sea transportation from Sulina to the Crimea is out of the question because of the low endurance of the small motor minesweepers (FR) and in any case the general naval situation precludes it. Moreover, according to the latest reports from the Crimea, we must expect the Russians to launch an operation against Eupatoria, the only possible unloading port. The landing stages there which were only used in emergency have already been blown up by the Army.
 - b. A special transfer of supply steamers from Sulina to the Crimea escorted by destroyers would not be justified considering the uncertain mine situation, the bad state of the vessels and the low grade of training. Every sinking of a naval vessel including vessels of the Danube Flotilla will adversely affect the resumption of supply traffic next spring.
3. In short, it can be stated that with the present situation at sea the risk involved in any attempt to bring seaborne supplies to the Crimea is in no ratio to the real profit. I have sent this information to Group Command, South and Commander, Special Duties Detachment. The latter agrees with my interpretation of the situation.
 4. Consideration must also be given to the question of whether steamers "Danubius" and "Suceava" which are still in Varna should be transferred to Constantza or not. For political reasons a further stay in a Bulgarian port is unsuitable. The 2 motor vessels "Budapest" and "Tisza" which are at readiness in Sulina could also be transferred to Constantza. However, Special Duties Detachment has raised objections to this because they would overcrowd Constantza which is likely to be attacked at any time. For the time being I have therefore decided not to transfer them, but the matter will be re-examined in the near future.

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5 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SW winds, force 1, no cloud, good visibility, smooth sea, temperature -10° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 light cruiser, 1 destroyer and 3 torpedoboats southwest of Eupatoria at 0900; at 1000 4 - 5 freighters, course not clear (see Crimea report). Theodosia at 1233; 3 freighters, each 3,000 tons, one on fire; at 1309 1 transport of 8,000 - 10,000 tons ablaze in 3 places.

Sevastopol at 1204: 5 minesweepers 3 miles east of the bay, course north.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported only slight activity of light naval forces. The focal point, however, had shifted to the Sevastopol area where 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers, several motor vessels and patrol vessels and 1 submarine appeared. Probably the cruiser and the destroyers will call at bases on the west coast of the Crimea during the night (see Eupatoria).

0600 Only normal patrol forces were identified off the east coast. Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz with "Krimhild" and 4 motor minesweepers (FR) on transfer to Constantza. The vessels put in to Sulina at 1715. Passage to Constantza is planned for 6 January.

South Russian Area:

Bug and Dnieper estuaries: Main Sea Transportation Office, Russia reported that motor vessel "Kolosvar" and dredge barge "Angara" which were on passage from Nikolaiev to Ochakov-North turned about on 3 January owing to severe freezing. They are stuck fast in the ice 6 miles from Nikolaiev. Naval Shore Commander "U" reported no special incidents.

The severe frost during the last few days with the consequent deterioration in ice conditions has ended. In Ochakov the temperature was 0° C. at 1400. A continuation of this warm weather would make it possible to start the convoys again sooner than expected.

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0230

Crimea:

Strong enemy forces landed successfully in Eupatoria from 4 transports protected by 6 destroyers. Heavy fighting in the streets. Naval Shore Commander "U" ordered that the entrance to the harbor should be blocked with all available means as soon as possible. It cannot be foreseen from here whether these orders can still be carried out. There has been no radio communication since 0400.

Readiness:

Destroyer "Marasesti" non-operational until the beginning of February for routine refitting.

Repairing of U-boat "Dolfinful" will be delayed until the middle of February. Reasons for the delay will be reported later.

Situation and Plans:

Group Command, South sent orders to prepare all vessels and personnel at once for minelaying operations off the west coast of the Crimea at 2 days' notice. The minefields are to prevent the Russians from attempting further landings north of Sevastopol. The necessary measures and composition of operational orders are to be arranged in cooperation with 4th Air Force. In each case, the decision as to execution and date will be the responsibility of Group Command.

After thorough discussion with Commander, Special Duties Detachment who was here for a short time, I reported:

1. This assignment does not come within the framework of the convoy tasks determined in agreement with Marshal Antonescu. The execution depends on the decision of Rumanian Naval Command and the approval of Marshal Antonescu. Admiral, Black Sea can only advise and cooperate operationally.
2. In my opinion, the material preparedness and the state of training of the personnel of the destroyers precludes any minelaying operations off the west coast of the Crimea at the present time. We have no suitable escort forces or mine-carriers. Moreover, the destroyers are not adapted for German mines.
3. Rumania's contribution to the war effort has so far exceeded our expectations and I fear that any losses might curb the Rumanian desire to cooperate.

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4. In my opinion, the situation has been completely changed by today's enemy landing near Eupatoria.
5. In addition, the ice conditions north of the parallel of Cape Tarkhankutzki make minelaying operations impossible.
6. I ask Group South to send me their interpretation of the situation which has apparently greatly changed as our views were previously similar. I await new operative instructions. I report that my own attitude (see War Diary 4 January) remains unchanged.

CONFIDENTIAL

6 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 3, cloudy, visibility 10 km., slight coastal haze, moderate sea, temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance reported unusually many vessels in Novorossisk at 1012 (aerial photograph): 1 light cruiser, 3 destroyers, 2 torpedoboats and 3 submarines; 1 vessel 130 meters long, type not recognized; 18 freighters of 1,200 - 8,000 tons, totaling about 50,000 tons; about 75 boats, 2 docks and 1 crane.

This large number of vessels obviously indicates that the enemy plans further landing operations.

Reports on 6 January:

Sevastopol (Jusnaya Bay) at 1140: 1 heavy cruiser.

Theodosia at 0938: 1 large tanker in the harbor and 2 medium freighters at the pier; at 1050 3 freighters, apparently destroyed in the harbor; at 1130 1 heavy cruiser (course and speed not reported) 5 miles south of Theodosia.

Eupatoria at 1344: 1 cruiser, 6 destroyers, 3 M.T.B.s and 1 medium freighter; at 1515 4 freighters, each 3,000 tons, 2 destroyers.

Anapa at 1200: 8 medium freighters.

Constant shuttle traffic by medium vessels in the coastal area between Anapa and Novorossisk.

Novorossisk at 0850: 1 battleship, 1 light cruiser, 6 medium freighters and 9 small freighters.

Tuapse at 1337: 1 heavy cruiser, 1 torpedoboat, 6 submarines, 1 tanker of 3,000 tons and 14 freighters totaling about 32,000 - 40,000 tons. The large number of vessels in this small harbor is also astonishing. Today's reports again seem to indicate continuing brisk traffic in the eastern Black Sea and enemy landing plans.

Naval Communications Command, Black Sea reported 1 cruiser, 1 flotilla leader, 3 destroyers, several M.T.B.s and motor mine-sweepers in the Sevastopol area and off the west coast of the Crimea. One large unit, 1 cruiser, 4 destroyers and several patrol boats were

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detected in the Novorossisk area and off the rest of northern part of the east coast. Near Batum there were 2 submarines.

0500 "Krimhild", 4 motor minesweepers (FR), mine-exploding vessel No. 191 and the yacht "Carolus Primus" put out from Sulina for Constantza. A strong SSW wind forced the vessels to put in to Sulina again. Another attempt to transfer the ships is planned for 7 January.

South Russian Area:

Bug and Dnieper estuaries: Motor vessel "Holosvar" is still ice-bound. Tomorrow she will again try to reach Nikolaiev.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that, according to a telephone conversation with Naval Port Commander, Eupatoria, the situation there had been consolidated, but there was still some fighting in the streets. Naval Port Commander is holding the position at the harbor. Casualties: 2 seriously wounded men, 10 slightly wounded men. Morale very good.

In Naval Port Commander's estimation, about 600 Russians landed from M.T.B.s and small vessels.

The former Naval Port Commander, Kerch was ordered by Naval Shore Commander "U" to proceed to Malta immediately with the best possible armament, leaving behind the radio equipment and radio personnel.

According to air reconnaissance, an enemy battalion is approaching Genichesk on the southeastern tip of the Arabatzkaya headland.

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7 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSW winds, force 2, cloudy, visibility 10 km., slight coastal haze, smooth sea, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 torpedoboat beached off Eupatoria at 1000. No further vessels were sighted.

Theodosia at 0742: 1 large and 2 medium vessels in the harbor; at 1458 a group of destroyers riding at anchor 20 miles southeast of Theodosia; 1 medium freighter and 1 M.T.B., course southeast, medium speed, 12 miles southeast of Theodosia.

Anapa at 1606: 2 freighters, each 2,000 tons, in the harbor; 2 freighters, each 2,000 tons, with course set for Kerch, 12 miles southeast of Anapa.

Ghelenjik at 1410: 1 small freighter and 6 boats in the harbor.

Novorossisk at 0830: 1 destroyer, course east, slight speed, off the harbor, at 1410 1 battleship in the harbor. Many more ships in the harbor, but no details reported.

At 1430 1 armed small freighter, course east, high speed, was identified 35 miles west of Novorossisk.

The few reconnaissance reports received seem to indicate that our own air activity must have been very slight. No conclusions can be drawn as to enemy activity and plans.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza (formerly Naval Communications Command, Black Sea) reported 2 destroyers and 4 - 6 small vessels at sea, also 1 submarine tender and 1 submarine near the southern part of the east coast. Patrol forces in the area of the Russian bases. Generally slight radio traffic. Naval Port Commander, Odessa telephoned at 2350 that several explosions were observed near Liebenau (Liebenthal? 16½ km. southeast of Odessa). The Rumanian Town Commandant also reported to Naval Port Command that several vessels had been sighted near Bugaz and that he had alerted the whole coastal area.

0500 This report was transmitted by telephone to Group South and Special Duties Detachment, Constantza (copy to Naval Command).

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As the report of the Rumanian Town Commandant, Odessa was incomplete, we are not sure whether we have to reckon with enemy attempts to land on Rumanian territory or not. Naval Command, Constantza ordered a strict look-out in the whole area. Naval Port Command, Odessa, who had been ordered to Bucharest for a conference on the situation in his area, co-operation with the Rumanians, port organization etc., has been directed to remain in Odessa until the situation is clarified.

No further reports on enemy vessels in Rumanian inshore waters were received during the night.

1025 With 0955 as time of origin, Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported by teletype that a German plane, type Ju 52, which had landed in Akkerman had not observed any enemy vessels in the Odessa area. Naval Port Commander therefore gave the all clear at 1745. In his opinion, the vessels off Bugaz probably belonged to an enemy minelaying formation.

1900 Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that he had had a conference with Chief of Staff, 2nd Army Corps with a view to a more efficient concentration of troops and, if necessary, a reinforcement of the coastal defenses by Rumanian Army troops. Since, in the absence of his Commanding General, Chief of Staff was unable to give binding promises, Naval Port Commander, Odessa and the German General in Transnistria (Major General von Rothkirch) arranged a conference on 8 January with the competent Rumanian authorities. Following this conference, there will be an inspection of the northern sector which is very weakly occupied.

Naval Port Commander reported that no untoward observations had been made during the day and that in his opinion it was a false alarm. I agree with him.

The continuing warm weather seems to be improving ice conditions in Bugaz/Odessa.

I instructed the Special Duties Detachment that if the warm weather continued convoy tasks would be resumed in the near future and that the 4 motor minesweepers (FR) of Danube Flotilla, Constantza would have to be prepared as soon as possible.

The warm weather is also having effect in the Bug and Dnieper estuaries. The ice near Ochakov-North has broken up and floated to the west.

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Motor vessel "Kolosvar" and the dredge barge "Angara" put in to Nikolaiev. No time was given.

Crimea:

Ak Mechet Bay is free of ice. Since enemy landing attempts must now be expected, Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. directed Naval Control Service Office to destroy all berthing places immediately. This will obviate any swift disembarkation of troops, material and supplies.

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported from Eupatoria that there is still fighting in the streets but that the enemy will be annihilated in a short time. In hard hand-to-hand fighting, Naval Port Commander managed to hold the position at the harbor against enemy assault detachments. Naval Shore Commander "U" praised the excellent morale of the weak forces which Naval Port Commander had at his disposal.

Enemy minelayer No. 15 ran aground near the landing stage and was abandoned by her crew.

According to a report from Naval Communications Liaison Officer to 4th Air Corps, only 3 houses have been captured by the enemy.

A Russian naval officer who had been taken prisoner stated that the enemy planned landings in Ak Mechet and in Bakal Bay as well as Eupatoria and that at least 3 divisions with vehicles of all kinds had embarked in Novorossisk.

The former Naval Port Commander, Kerch was ordered by Naval Shore Commander "U" to go to Yalta with all his personnel as soon as possible. Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that the enemy detachment which approached Genichesk had been annihilated.

Readiness:

Tug "Romulus" will probably be ready for operations again on 25 January.

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8 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 4, overcast, good visibility, moderate sea, temperature -2° C.

Air reconnaissance sent no reports, probably on account of unfavorable weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 3 destroyers at sea (1 in the Sevastopol area and 2 off the northern part of the east coast), 2 submarines (1 about 30 miles south of Theodosia in the afternoon, 1 60 miles southwest of Cape Kheronese in the evening) and 1 submarine tender off the central part of the east coast. Generally slight radio traffic.

Rumanian Area:

On account of the ice and general weather conditions, no minesweeping activity or convoy assignments were possible. However, the comparatively mild weather which seems to be continuing means that in a few days these tasks will be possible again.

South Russian Area:

Odessa: No incidents. It must now be assumed that the report of 9 vessels near Odessa, course south, during the night of 6/7 January was a false alarm.

Crimea:

- 1818 Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported from Ak Mechet in radiogram 1731/70 that at 1545 3 naval vessels, course north, had been sighted 10 km. southwest of Kacha (? - our maps show only a small river with this name some distance north of Sevastopol). Landing attempts must be expected at Ak Mechet. First degree of alarm and immediate destruction of landing facilities have been ordered. In Eupatoria, the enemy possesses only one block of houses from which they will soon be driven.
- 1525 Two cruisers and several transports were sighted on a northerly course - a further indication of a possible landing attempt at Ak Mechet.

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Naval Shore Commander "U" ordered motor boats to patrol during the night to intercept any landing attempts promptly.

Sarabus (H.Q. of 11th Army H.Q.):

In a joint discussion, Naval Shore Commanders "U" and "V" and Naval Liaison Officer determined that Naval Shore Commander "V" should immediately transfer all his 5 Naval Port Commanders to reinforce Naval Shore Commander "U". As no agreement was reached on the proposal of Naval Shore Commander "V" to divide the total area between the 2 Naval Shore Commanders, I decided that Naval Shore Commander "U" should maintain overall control in the Crimea and thus temporarily represent the Navy with 11th Army Corps. He will have to decide whether the staff and personnel of Naval Shore Commander "V" should give assistance e.g. in the administration of supplies in Nikolaiev. If this does not seem necessary, Naval Shore Commander "V" will proceed to Nikolaiev with his staff and personnel to be at my disposal.

Theodosia: According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., no plans for a large-scale enemy attack have been uncovered. Probable reason: lack of artillery and supply difficulties.

170th and 132nd Infantry Divisions have been withdrawn from Sevastopol and are proceeding to Theodosia to support our forces (mostly Rumanian).

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9 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 4, overcast, good visibility, moderate sea, temperature 5° C.

Air reconnaissance reported:

Sewastopol at 0810: 2 naval vessels putting out, course eastsoutheast; at 0930 2 naval vessels, 1 of them firing at the Army front, the other one putting out, course eastsoutheast; at 1020 10 small to medium freighters and 6 boats in the harbor and the neighboring bays. At 1445 1 cruiser in the harbor was hit by a bomb and probably destroyed.

At 0710 many vessels were sighted far southwest of Cape Sarich on unidentified courses. Near them there was lively air activity. In the opinion of 4th Air Corps, this activity suggests the presence of an aircraft carrier.

Again and again our own air reconnaissance has reported an aircraft carrier, but according to all other available reports the Russian Black Sea Fleet possesses no carrier but at best a transport vessel with an emergency superstructure for this purpose.

Theodosia at 1250: 1 transport of about 2,000 tons off the harbor. At 1030 1 transport of 6,000 tons was detected 10 miles west of Novorossisk and 4 transports of 3,000 - 6,000 tons, course northwest, were sighted 10 miles southwest of the harbor.

This report probably means that reinforcements are being brought up to Theodosia. In Novorossisk harbor (aerial photograph) the following changes have occurred since the photographic report of 6 January: 1 battleship, 1 destroyer, 2 torpedoboats, 3 submarines, 1 naval vessel (130 meters long, type unknown), 1 tanker of 3,000 tons and 1 freighter of 4,000 tons have put out to sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported slight traffic. In the afternoon 1 destroyer was detected between the Crimea and Novorossisk; in the evening there were 3 further destroyers at sea, 1 submarine off the northern part of the east coast and another one off the southern part. Several M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers were intercepted between Tuapse and Sochi.

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West Coast:

Many explosions were observed near the coast from Odessa as far as southeast of Bugaz (probably mine explosions caused by ice pressure).

South Russian Area:

After the conference with 11th Army H.Q., Naval Shore Commander "U" returned to Nikolaiev and Naval Shore Commander "V" to Jassy.

Crimea:

The reports of Naval Port Commander, Eupatoria on the enemy landing on 5 January were delayed owing to communications difficulties.

According to a report from Naval Port Commander on 9 January, the Russian naval vessel which ran aground was the minelayer "Wrsiwatel" (according to "Weyer": minesweeper "Wrsw", 500 tons, speed 18 knots, 1 10 cm. and 2 4.5 guns).

"At least 10 vessels appeared in the inner bay from 0145 until 0830, among them 1 troop transport with small tanks. Three M.T.B.s were lying at the destroyed landing stage. A successful landing was carried out with the assistance of partisans and a simultaneous bombardment from sea. German troops defended strongly and the personnel of Naval Port Commander gave a good account of themselves. Lieutenant Wetsch was particularly mentioned by Naval Port Commander. Eight men were slightly wounded, among them Lieutenant Wetsch; 2 men were seriously wounded. At 0400 the radio station was destroyed. From 0830 onwards, the enemy vessels were beyond the range of our captured guns which we had used with success. A Russian air attack took place at 1000. Heavy fighting in the harbor area all day on 6 January. In the forenoon M.T.B.s made repeated landing attempts which failed. Heavy fighting in the streets with Army troops and partisans. The Army coastal artillery which was operating there successfully shelled several enemy vessels at long range. Probably 1 transport was hit. Our defenses were assisted by continuous waves of our planes.

According to the report from Naval Port Commander, the morale of the naval detachment was excellent. There was some violent hand-to-hand fighting. Three men were taken prisoner and made valuable statements."

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According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., 1,300 Russians landed in Eupatoria. The fighting is over. Minor actions in Theodosia. During the night of 8/9 January, more troops and supplies were landed.

Special Duties Detachment, Varna made a check sweep in the inner bay and in the area near the Varna breakwater for 6 miles in the direction of 270°. No mines were swept.

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10 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, visibility up to 10 km.,
slight haze, calm sea, temperature 1^o C.

Air reconnaissance reported only the following
vessels: At 1041 4 small freighters, course
east-southeast, off the northeast coast of the
Kerch headland and 2 ice-bound vessels, probably
torpedoboats, off the southwest coast; 1
freighter of 4,000 tons, course southeast,
about 10 miles west of Anapa; several small
freighters and fishing vessels in the harbor.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
3 destroyers off the southern part of the east
coast and 2 destroyers off the northern part.
In the Sevastopol, Novorossisk and Batum areas,
there were also several M.F.B.s and motor
minesweepers, 2 submarines, 1 of them near the
southern part of the east coast. Slight
radio traffic, mostly by patrol forces.

Black Sea:

Nothing to report from the west coast.

South Russian Area:

In Nikolaiev Naval Shore Commander "U" proposed
Kherson as H.Q. for Naval Shore Commander "V".
Quarters are better there and in any case
Nikolaiev is overcrowded. The proposal was
approved.

In accordance with the decisions made at Sarabus,
Naval Shore Commander "U" asked Naval Shore
Commander "V" to dispatch his 5 Naval Port
Commanders in the following order of priority:

- a. Naval Port Commanders 10 and 14 to Ak Mechet,
- b. Naval Port Commander 13 to Eupatoria,
- c. Naval Port Commanders 11 and 12 to Yalta.

There is only one report from Naval Liaison
Officer to 11th Army H.Q. on the situation in
the Crimea. It states that 400 of the enemy
were killed in Eupatoria and 203 taken prisoner.
In addition, 1,306 partisans, civilians and
soldiers in plain clothes were shot in accordance
with martial law.

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The counter-attack on Theodosia has been fixed for 11 January. An enemy attack on our own main defense line has been repulsed.

In Eupatoria the final losses of the Naval Port Commander amount to 2 men killed and 8 men wounded. Five men were wounded from the Naval Control Service Office.

Naval Port Commander reported that M.T.B. No. 111 (length 15 meters, beam 2.5 meters, 850 h.p.), which was probably a special vessel used for laying smoke screens, had run aground near Arsaki and had been secured. The vessel does not seem to be badly damaged.

Kerch headland: According to a report from Naval Harbor Master, Genichesk, no enemy forces have been seen between Ak Mona and Chokrak. According to prisoners' statements, an enemy detachment of 800 men is still in Chokrak.

Situation and Plans:

1. According to a report from the Rumanian fighters, which at my request were sent from Odessa to check the ice conditions, the waters between Ochakov-North and Odessa and between Odessa and Bugaz are free from ice. East of Ochakov, however, and on the Bug, there is still heavy drift ice and solid ice. Southeast of Odessa and near the coast there is an ice-floe of about 6 x 1.5 km. drifting seawards with the wind. As soon as the weather allows, I plan to return the Danube Flotilla via Sulina to Bugaz for the necessary checking of the supply routes to Odessa (if possible as far as Ochakov). The speedy resumption of the convoy tasks depends upon the result of this check.
2. Group Command indicated the urgent necessity of transferring the Italian tanker now in Constantza to the Bosphorus as soon as possible. On return passage, her escort is to bring the Rumanian motor vessel "Sceged" to a Bulgarian or Rumanian port. "Sceged" has been ready for some time and she has a very valuable cargo.

At present no long-range air reconnaissance can be provided for this vessel, as the planes are unable to take off because of the ice. They are being overhauled. Only Rumanian and Bulgarian land-based planes are available

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for reconnaissance and they can only be employed as far as 40 km. from the coast. I have therefore asked Group Command, South to decide whether the convoy assignments should be carried out without adequate protection.

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11 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, overcast, snow with fog, visibility up to 2 km., rough sea, temperature -5° C.

Air reconnaissance reported only the following vessels: Novorossisk at 1002 (aerial photograph): 1 probable light cruiser, 7 freighters and 2 floating docks.

Tuapse at 1034: 2 cruisers, 6 submarines and 8 freighters of varying size.

At 1135 1 light cruiser and 4 destroyers, course northwest, high speed, were detected about 55 miles west of Sochi.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported a slight increase in radio traffic. One cruiser and 1 large formation comprising a leading vessel and 3 destroyers were intercepted off the central and northern parts of the east coast.

Off the southeast coast of the Crimea, there were 2 submarines apparently sailing west, while 2 or 3 more submarines and 1 submarine tender were detected near the southern part of the east coast. There were some M.T.B.s and minesweeping forces off Sevastopol.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

The temporary improvement in the weather is at an end. The wind is increasing and temperatures are lower again. I fear that it will not be possible to resume the convoy assignments.

Crimea:

No fresh reports concerning the situation in the Crimea.

Situation:

Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea (Mikolaiev) informed me that he urgently required further supply vessels. He asked if in view of the thaw it would be possible to run one convoy

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at least as far as Odessa. I replied as follows:

1. We have made preparations for convoys to run again whenever the ice situation substantially improves.
2. Before the convoys put out, the mine-free route from Sulina to Odessa must be checked, if possible as far as Ochakov.
3. Motor minesweepers (FR) can only operate if the ice situation and the weather at sea and in Odessa harbor improve.
4. I call Chief Quartermaster's attention to the fact that the chance to send a convoy at least as far as Odessa had been lost at the end of December (see War Diary 1 January, 1942), because he had not agreed to my proposal made on the morning of 27 December to regard Odessa as an emergency port of destination until 2245 on 31 December, 1941. (At that time, the Rumanian steamers "Oituz" and "Ardeal" and the Hungarian motor vessel "Budapest" were ready to put out with a total cargo of 11,000 tons.)
5. On account of the ice situation, it has been impossible since 1 January to send any convoys out.

General:

Special Command Roth (now under the Intelligence Officer) reported the following on the strength of prisoners' statements:

1. Heavy cruiser "Kuibishev" is in Novorossisk. Engines have not yet been installed. (Without doubt, this is the roofed cruiser which air reconnaissance has repeatedly reported.)
2. Probably heavy cruiser "Frunse" will now be completed. Armament 18 cm. guns.
3. Light cruiser "Chervona Ukraina" was sunk by planes off Sevastopol.
4. Heavy cruiser "Krasny Kavkas" was damaged off Theodosia in an air attack. According to further prisoners' statements, the cruiser sank about 200 meters from the breakwater.
5. Wooden M.T.B.s laid British magnetic mines in the area between Odessa and Ochakov

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(cylindrical shape, about 1 meter in height, diameter about 30 to 40 cm., upper and lower parts connected by a flange, lower part with beveled base, weight of mine about 400 to 500 kg., weight of explosive charge unknown).
An M.T.B. can carry six of these mines.

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12 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 6, overcast, snow with fog, visibility up to 1 km., rough sea, temperature -7° C.

Air reconnaissance sent no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser or flotilla leader with 1 destroyer off the northern part of the east coast proceeding south. Off the southern part of the east coast there were 1 cruiser or flotilla leader, 1 destroyer and 3 submarines. Two destroyers and several M.T.B.s, motor mine-sweepers and patrol vessels were detected off the northeast coast of the Crimea.

Rumanian Area:

Nothing to report.

South Russian Area:

In spite of the assistance of icebreakers, the attempt to transfer the discharged and partly reloaded supply vessels "Carpati", "Zar Ferdinand", "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" from Nikolaiev to Ochakov-North failed. The vessels will have to winter in Nikolaiev.

Some of the crews will be granted leave, but guards and anti-aircraft gunners will remain on board.

Crimea:

According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., there was no enemy action in Theodosia today. Our preparations for a counter-attack are progressing, though hampered by weather and road difficulties.

Readiness:

Motor minesweepers FR 1 and FR 3 are ready for operations.

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13 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 6, overcast. snow with fog, visibility up to 1 km., very rough sea, temperature -11° C.

Air reconnaissance sent no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser or flotilla leader and 4 destroyers off Sevastopol and the southeast coast of the Crimea. There were 2 destroyers off the northern part of the east coast.

Off the central to southern parts of the east coast, 1 cruiser or flotilla leader and 4 destroyers were detected. One unidentified vessel (submarine ?) was located about 100 miles westsouthwest of Cape Khersonese at 1347.

Bulgarian/Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

Lower Danube:

According to a Rumanian report, there is an ice-floe between Miles 38 and 43. All traffic has been stopped. The transfer of motor minesweepers FR 1 and FR 3 from Galatz via Sulina to Constantza is impossible for the time being.

South Russian Area:

At 1717 red flares were observed east of Odessa (later observation put it more to the south). Our own planes were not over the sea. No reports available concerning one of our planes which is missing. Probably the signals came from a Russian plane about to crash or a Russian vessel (submarine or M.T.B.). For security reasons, Naval Port Commander ordered a special look-out, but no further reports were received.

Crimea:

According to the situation report of 11th Army H.Q., troops and war material have been landed continuously in Theodosia during the last few days. It is impossible to fix the date for our attack because of the weather.

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14 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, no cloud, slight fog, visibility 4 km., calm sea, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 3 small vessels, probably naval vessels in the northern part of Sevastopol Bay at 0822; at 0934 1 floating dock of medium size and 2 torpedo-boats in a bay east of Sevastopol.

Theodosia at 0900: 1 medium freighter and 2 small freighters; at 1330 1 convoy (1 transport of 3,000 tons and 5 small escort vessels), course southeast, 15 miles east of Theodosia.

Kerch at 1200: 4 freighters of up to 2,000 tons, 1 tanker of 2,000 - 3,000 tons and 3 gunboats putting out to sea; 10 - 15 small freighters, 5 medium freighters and 1 destroyer 2 miles northeast of Taman in Kerch Strait.

About 10 miles west of Anapa 1 medium freighter, course northwest, and 1 medium tanker, 1 large and 2 small freighters escorted by 1 destroyer and 2 patrol boats, course southeast, were sighted at 1130.

Anapa: 3 small freighters and 8 boats.

Novorossisk at 1115: 9 large and 5 medium freighters; off the harbor 2 small freighters, course west, and 2 small freighters, course south; at 1140 1 destroyer and 1 large freighter, course westnorthwest, 20 miles southwest of Novorossisk.

The reports show lively shipping traffic from which considerable supply measures and further enemy landing attempts may be concluded.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 cruisers or flotilla leaders, 5 - 6 destroyers, 1 submarine tender and 1 submarine in the Crimean area with concentration near the northern part of the east coast. Several M.T.B.s and mine-sweepers off Sevastopol and Tuapse.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

About midnight on 13/14 January, 2 M.T.B.s approached

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Aircha. Our artillery fired 6 rounds.
No further observations or attempts to land.

A large M.T.B. drifted ashore about 10 miles
east of Karacha: 3 men dead, 1 prisoner.

Sea of Azov:

According to a later report from Naval Shore
Commander "U", there was an air raid on
Genichesk on 13 January. Four bombs were
dropped. No damage reported.

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15 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, fog, visibility up to 1 km.,
calm sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance reported:

Sevastopol at 1137: 1 light cruiser,
1 destroyer, 3 medium freighters and 14 small
freighters and boats; off the harbor 1 M.T.B.,
course southeast.

At 0915 4 small freighters were detected
sailing close to the coast, course northeast,
3 miles east of Theodosia.

Theodosia at 0940: 1 naval vessel at the
eastern breakwater, also 4 medium freighters
apparently sunk, and 1 large and 2 small
freighters, probably damaged.

At 1740 a convoy comprising 2 naval vessels
and 2 freighters of about 4,000 tons, course
north, was sighted 15 miles southeast of
Suduk.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
continuous activity of light naval forces.

In the area between Novorossisk and Theodosia
there were 2 cruisers, 1 flotilla leader and
5 destroyers. In the area off Sevastopol as
far as the southern point of the Crimea,
1 cruiser and 1 destroyer were detected in
addition to M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers.
Close to the southern part of the east coast
of the Black Sea, there was presumed to be
1 submarine.

Rumanian Area:

0700 Naval ferry barges Nos. 122, 130 and 134 put
out from Constantza to the south and put in
to Cavarna at 1700. Further passage to Varna
is planned for 16 January.

South Russian Area:

0210 Odessa reported that both Koblevo and Lustdorf
observed searchlight activity at sea. It
is possible that this indicated either a
Russian minelaying operation against the
supply route south of Odessa or that it had
some connection with the light signals observed
in the same area last night.

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Rumanian fighters which took off at daybreak were unable to identify any enemy vessels at sea. The alarm which had been ordered immediately was canceled at 0430.

Bug and Dnieper estuaries: Nothing to report.

Crimea:

0600 The Rumanian and German troops launched the attack on the Russian troops outside Theodosia. Good progress was made, but fighting was heavy in places.

Situation:

In a detailed survey of the situation which I submitted to Group Command, South with copy to Special Duties Detachment, I pointed out that, before supply traffic could be effectively resumed to Odessa, Nikolaiev and Kherson in the spring and later to the Crimea, Sevastopol would have to be taken. As long as this main base is not in German hands, it will constitute a threat which considering the ratio of forces at sea, entails too great a risk for our supply transportation at sea.

Moreover from Sevastopol the enemy will be able to make harassing attacks and even landings on the whole west coast of the Black Sea and between Odessa and the Perckop isthmus. A landing with adequately strong forces on Perekop would endanger the southern flank of the whole German eastern front.

Considering the situation in the Crimea which, for the time being, is obviously difficult, I think it necessary to call the attention of higher commands to the inevitable result of Army operations in the Crimea on the Navy, especially the abandoning of the Crimea which was already considered with a view to shortening the front. The Crimea is of decisive importance for the operations planned by Army Group, South in the spring.

(Signed) Fleischer.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 JANUARY, 1942

PG/31503

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16 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, overcast, visibility
200 meters, fog, calm sea, temperature -6° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following:

Sevastopol at 1340: 1 probable light cruiser,
2 medium and 10 small freighters in the harbor.

At 1205 1 convoy, comprising 1 medium and
5 small freighters and 5 M.T.B.s, course south,
off Cape Kheronese; at 1345 1 light cruiser
and 3 patrol boats, course northeast, 15 miles
east of Sudak; at 1555 1 destroyer, course
northwest, 60 miles south of Theodosia; at
1505 2 light cruisers and 1 destroyer, course
southeast, 5 miles east of Anapa; at 0845
1 destroyer, course 160°, medium speed, 30
miles southsouthwest of Novorossisk; at 0935
1 light cruiser, 2 torpedoboats and 2 medium
merchant ships putting out from Sevastopol;
at 1242 1 heavy cruiser, course southeast,
medium speed, 40 miles southwest of Novorossisk;
at 1145 1 medium freighter, lying stopped, off
the coast 10 miles northwest of Tuapse; at
1150 1 small naval vessel, course eastsoutheast,
medium speed, 40 miles northwest of Tuapse.

Batum at 1400: 2 light cruisers and 5 medium
freighters in the harbor.

Today's air reconnaissance reports were
numerous as a result of the favorable weather
in the operational area. They again showed
that enemy convoy and patrol traffic continued
to be heavy, particularly in the northeastern
Black Sea.

Radio intercept reports revealed the same
picture.

Main Naval D/P Station, Constantza detected
increasing Fleet radio traffic until noon,
focal point south of Kerch Strait and moving
west. The following ships were detected:
1 large vessel (probably an old battleship),
2 cruisers, 1 flotilla leader, 10 destroyers
and 6 submarines.

During the afternoon 1 cruiser, 5 destroyers
and 2 submarines were detected in the Sevastopol
area as far as the southern tip of the Crimea,
while 1 flotilla leader and 2 destroyers were
identified east of the Crimea.

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One large vessel (presumably an old battleship) and 1 cruiser were detected in the Novorossisk area as far as the central part of the east coast; 3 destroyers, 1 submarine and several minesweepers off Tuapse; 3 submarines were in radio communication with stations on the southern part of the coast.

1045

Main Naval D/F Station reported in Most Immediate radiogram 0914 that the naval forces detected yesterday in the eastern Black Sea were proceeding westwards and, according to inaccurate bearings, were in the area south to southwest of Sevastopol between 0600 and 0700.

This report was immediately passed on to Rumanian commands and the coast was alerted, but no further reports were received.

This case again reveals the difficulties resulting from lack of long-range reconnaissance planes which could have checked on these radio intercept and reconnaissance reports.

Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

Plans:

Naval Special Duties Detachment had intended that the Italian tanker "Albaro" should be escorted by Rumanian naval forces on the first part of her voyage from Constantza and then by Bulgarian M.T.B.s as far as the Bosphorus. If the weather deteriorated, the tanker was not to proceed direct to the Bosphorus but via Cape Kuru Burnu. From there she was to continue passage within Turkish territorial waters. I objected to this plan as the present weather would impose restrictions on Bulgarian M.T.B.s in the open sea and there is a danger of submarines in the vicinity of Cape Kuru Burnu. Commander, Naval Special Duties Detachment then decided that Rumanian destroyers should carry out the whole assignment, proceeding direct from Constantza to the Bosphorus. In any case, the weather will have to improve in the southwestern Black Sea before the vessels sail.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

From 0100 to 0125, 2 enemy ships shelled the

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town of Eupatoria at long range. No further reports were received concerning damage or landing attempts.

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that Yalta had been bombarded from 0100 to 0230 by 2 or 3 ships, presumably using light anti-aircraft guns. No hits were observed.

From Theodosia, 4th Air Corps reported by Most Immediate radiogram 1001/97 that the enemy had landed in Sudak (some 20 miles west of Theodosia). Enemy strength unknown. No further reports were received.

Bulgarian Area:

1225 The 3 naval ferry barges which put in to Kaliakra yesterday on transfer from Constantza put in to Varna. One mine was swept off Mangalia. It was sunk by gunfire.

When the Special Duties formation put in to Burgas, 1 boat was slightly damaged by the ice; she will be non-operational for 2 days.

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17 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, overcast, snow and fog, visibility up to 1 km., rough sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following:
Sevastopol at 1125: 1 destroyer, 2 freighters and 10 boats in the harbor, 1 torpedoboat putting in, 1 small freighter and 2 boats in the north bay, 2 small freighters and 1 patrol boat in the south bay.

No further reports were submitted on naval vessels or convoys in the Crimean area or between the Crimea and the east coast.

Kerch at 1050: 1 small merchant ship in the harbor; 2 small freighters 10 miles south of Kerch; 1 small freighter, course northwest, in the southeastern entrance to Kerch Strait at 1545.

Anapa at 1035 and 1520: 10 small and 2 medium freighters and about 10 boats in the harbor.

Novorossisk at 1245: 2 light cruisers, 5 destroyers, 1 torpedoboat, 8 patrol boats or minesweepers and 11 small merchant ships in the harbor, 1 large and 3 small freighters, lying stopped, off the bay at 1536.

Tuapse at 0920 (aerial photograph): 1 heavy cruiser (new construction), 1 destroyer, 4 probable torpedoboats, 7 submarines, 3 large tankers, 2 large freighters of up to 8,000 tons, 5 freighters of 2,000 - 4,000 tons and about 20 small vessels.

There are unusually many enemy ships in the port of Tuapse. It is a pity that the air reconnaissance report was very incomplete. It gave no information on activity at sea.

Main Naval D/I Station, Constantza reported during the night that no enemy radio traffic had been detected since 2000 on 16 January.

On the basis of previous experience, the recent heavy radio traffic might mean that the enemy is planning or carrying out a large-scale landing operation. In view of the entire situation and present ice conditions, a landing operation in Karkinitzki Bay near Klarovka or

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on the north coast of the Crimea with the aim of disrupting the supply lines to the isthmus seems most likely. The main body of the Russian naval forces might of course be withdrawing to Sevastopol.

I transmitted this interpretation by radiogram to Naval Group South, Special Duties Detachment, Naval Shore Commander "U" and 11th Army H.Q. (Naval Liaison Officer).

Main Naval D/F Station located the following on 17 January: 1 formation (2 flotilla leaders, 2 destroyers and 3 submarines), presumably course northwest, off the southern part of the east coast; 4 patrol boats and 1 submarine in the Sevastopol area; 1 destroyer 85 miles eastnortheast of Sino Burun (the most northerly tip of the Asia Minor Black Sea coast) at 0630.

Radio silence was maintained off the central and northern parts of the east coast and in the entire Crimean area.

Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

The transfer of the Italian tanker "Albaro" had to be postponed again owing to the weather. According to the forecast, unfavorable weather can be expected to continue for the next 2 or 3 days.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Increased readiness was ordered in Ak Mechet because of a report submitted to Naval Shore Commander "U" regarding a possible enemy landing operation on the north coast of the Crimea.

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that the attack on Theodosia was making good progress.

The Commanding General in charge of the isthmus ordered that all landing stages at Genichesk should be destroyed at once. I pointed out to Naval Shore Commander "U" and Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. that the destruction of the landing stages would not be necessary as the harbor was already blocked by ice. I also advised them to remember that complete destruction of the quay installations in these occupied harbors would make them useless for our own supply

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traffic later. Moreover, in Genichesk there is the danger that, whilst blasting the quays and stages, we might also destroy the captured fishing vessels lying there which may be of great importance for our later operations.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

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16 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 6, overcast, visibility 500 meters, drifting snow, very rough sea, temperature -10° C.

Air reconnaissance transmitted only a few unimportant reports:

Sevastopol at 1222: 1 medium freighter, lying stopped, and 3 small freighters off the bay; 7 small freighters putting out, course 340°; 1 patrol boat, lying stopped.

Although the other escort forces were not observed, this was probably a convoy assembling.

Kerch at 1138: 3 medium freighters and 1 tug in the harbor.

Novorossisk at 1038: 1 light cruiser, 2 naval vessels (type not identified), 3 medium and 4 small freighters in the harbor; 1 small freighter, course 150°, 10 miles northwest of Novorossisk at 1026.

Anapa at 1048: 1 small freighter and 10 boats off the harbor.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 5 M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers and some patrol boats in the Sevastopol area: 1 flotilla leader off the southern tip of the Crimea; also 3 submarines at sea, 2 of them assumed to be between the Crimea and Novorossisk. Radio traffic generally slight.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Lieutenant Commander Birnbaum took over the Danube Flotilla, Constantza from Lieutenant Commander Helleparth who had been in command since 11 November, 1941.

Crimea:

4th Air Corps reported that Theodosia (with the exception of the southern suburbs where fighting is still going on) and the northern part of the coast had been cleared of the enemy. According to a later report on the situation on 17 January from Naval Shore Commander "U", fighting for an island of resistance in the vicinity of the cathedral in Eupatoria continued from 0900 to 1500.

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19 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 6, overcast, visibility 2 km., moderate fog, very rough sea, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports owing to bad weather in the entire Black Sea area. No conclusions could be drawn as to enemy convoy and patrol traffic or operative intentions.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser and several patrol vessels off the central part of the east coast as far as Novorossisk, also 1 destroyer, course east, some 50 miles south of Kerch Strait; 1 probable flotilla leader and 1 submarine probably south of the Crimean coast; 4 M.T.B.s or motor minesweepers and 4 - 6 patrol vessels in the Sevastopol area.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

4th Air Corps reported that 5,000 prisoners were taken and 60 tanks destroyed in the Theodosia area.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Chiculescu" non-operational for repairs to her cable winch and adjustment of her compasses. Duration will be reported later.

Bucharest:

The office of the Rumanian Under Secretary of the Navy reported that they had information that for alleged commercial reasons Turkey intended to confiscate the Rumanian passenger motor vessels "Transsylvania" and "Bessarabia" which had been transferred to Istanbul as a security measure before the outbreak of war. The Rumanian Government is therefore planning to bring these ships to a Rumanian port for safety.

I pointed out that withdrawal of the ships at the present time would involve external repercussions and that the Rumanian Foreign

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Office should therefore be approached. I have informed the German Embassy in Bucharest.

I reported the Rumanian intention to Naval Group Command, South and suggested that Naval Attache, Istanbul should be informed by Group Command because his attitude should be known as soon as possible. I also suggested to Group Command that these ships in Istanbul might be protected by taking them over under German colors if this were possible and advisable.

In my opinion, the transfer of the Italian tanker "Albaro" to the Bosphorus, planned when the weather improves, and the later transfer of the 2 Rumanian ships to a Bulgarian port would be dangerous in each case, because without doubt the Russian naval forces, especially the submarines at sea, have been informed of these convoys. I would prefer a separate operation on the following lines:

The 2 Rumanian R-class destroyers could pick up motor vessels "Transsylvania" and "Bessarabia" at nightfall off the Bosphorus, then proceed temporarily north on deceptive course and later steer a westerly course far from the coast to the Bulgarian port in question.

The 2 Rumanian ships should be kept at 12 hours' readiness and possibly put out first as a blind while the actual sailing would not take place until some days later.

I informed Group Command and Naval Special Duties Detachment of this plan.

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20 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 5, in squalls up to force 6, drifting snow, visibility 200 meters, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 destroyers, 2 M.T.B.s or motor minesweepers and 2 patrol vessels off the northern part of the east coast and 1 flotilla leader and 4 minesweepers and patrol vessels in the Sevastopol area as far as the south Crimean coast. Radio traffic generally slight, increasing in the evening.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea/Sea of Azov:

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that enemy air raids on Eupatoria and Mariupol were increasing, but that no damage had been caused.

According to reports from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., Theodosia is now entirely free of the enemy.

Plans:

Commander, Naval Special Duties Detachment proposed that, as bad weather might continue indefinitely, the Italian tanker "Albaro" should be transferred to the Bosphorus without escort as the danger from submarines would be negligible in such weather.

After discussing the matter with Group Command, I informed Commander, Special Duties Detachment that I considered it too dangerous to have this ship transferred without escort because

- a. we do not have adequate information on weather conditions in the southwestern Black Sea,
- b. possible loss of "Albaro" might bring undesirable repercussions from Italian Naval Staff if the ship were unescorted, as 2 Italian tankers have already been lost in the Black Sea.

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Readiness:

Motor minesweeper FR 11 again operational.

Gunboat "Chiculescu" again operational apart from compass adjustments to be carried out in better weather.

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21 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 6, overcast, squally, heavy driving snow, fog, visibility 20 meters, very rough sea, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 cruisers, 1 submarine and 1 minesweeper between the Crimea and the northeast coast and 3 M.T.B.s or motor minesweepers off the southeast coast. Radio traffic generally slight.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports were received from Naval Shore Commander "U" or Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q.

Readiness:

Rumanian tug "Amsel" non-operational until 22 January for repairs to her cooling pump.

Rumanian tug "Forsch" non-operational for repairs to her generator. Duration will be reported later.

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22 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 5, fair, moderate fog,
visibility 2 miles, rough sea, temperature -12° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted only 1 report
stating that 1 transport (approximately 5,000
tons), course west, medium speed and 2 freighters,
each about 3,000 tons (without further data),
were sighted in Tamanski Bay.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
unusually many submarines. A total of
10 boats was detected, 7 of them with a
submarine tender on a westerly course between
Theodosia and the southern tip of the Crimea
about 1800. Some submarines may have been
transferred to Sevastopol.

2114 A large vessel, presumably the old battleship
"Parishkaya Kommuna", was detected some 45 miles
south of Sudak. Radio traffic was detected
between this ship and the submarines.
Some M.T.B.s, motor minesweepers and patrol
boats were detected in the Sevastopol and
Novorossisk areas.

Bucharest:

Chief Communications Officer, Commanding
General Armed Forces reported that, according
to information from Senior Army Communications
Officer, 11th Army H.Q., the enemy had ordered
German recognition signals for their planes
from 22 to 24 January. This information was
immediately forwarded to the German and Rumanian
commands involved.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Additional report from Naval Shore Commander
"U" for 21 January: Naval Port Commander 8
reported that enemy planes attacked Asaki at
0615 and Eupatoria at 1050. Six bombs were
dropped, causing slight damage. The Army
telephone exchange was destroyed.

No special incidents were reported from the
areas of the various naval port commanders.

Readiness:

Rumanian tug "Amsol" operational.

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23 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 1, no cloud, moderate haze, visibility 4 km., pack ice, temperature -20° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that six of the 10 submarines detected at sea yesterday are still at sea today with their tender, probably west of the southern tip of the Crimea.

One submarine was detected some 40 miles westsouthwest of Balaklava at 2126, 1 destroyer 30 miles south of Cape Ayu Dagh at 1420 and 1 destroyer some 30 miles south of Malta at 1516.

Some M.T.B.s, motor minesweepers, minesweepers and patrol vessels were in the same area and off the south coast of the Crimea.

Two cruisers and 2 destroyers were located in the Tuapse area. These reports give no indication of enemy operational measures.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

According to a report from Naval Shore Commander "U", Naval Port Commander, Malta sent out motor boats to look for the cutters which 11th Army H.Q. reported were supplying provisions by night to the Russians who had landed near Sudak.

Theodosia:

Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Corps reported from Theodosia that 1 cruiser had shelled the Army front near Dian.Kamishy during the day. Destroyers shelled the coast and the Army front at night. Weather conditions prevent dive-bomber operations.

The Army front near Stary Crimca was said by 11th Army H.Q. to have been shelled by 30.5 cm. guns. That must mean that the old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna", which was not detected in radio traffic today but observed at sea yesterday with a number of submarines, must still be at sea.

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Readiness:

Motor minesweepers FR 2, 4, 7 and 8 will be docked for 8 to 10 days for examination of their bottoms and propellers and investigation of certain damage suffered through overstrain. The boats will be operational again for urgent short operations within 48 hours.

Presumably mine-exploding vessel No. 191 will not be operational until 15 February. For urgent short-term operations she will be operational within 8 days.

Survey of the Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Corps sent a report that air reconnaissance found the coast ice-bound from Yegorlyski Bay as far as Dzhariulgach Peninsula. In front of the firm ice-shelf which could be used by infantry, there is a soft ice-zone which in the opinion of Naval Liaison Officer makes it impossible for the enemy to land.

According to another report from Naval Liaison Officer, the coast is free from ice from Cape Tarkhankutzki via Eupatoria as far as approximately 10 miles north of Sevastopol, but in my opinion no landings can be expected on this part of the coast.

I informed the German Army Mission of this situation.

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24 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No report submitted.

Air reconnaissance submitted only a few reports:

1 medium freighter, course south, off Cape Khersonese at 0840 and 1 freighter, course south, off Balaklava at 1050.

Batum at 1230: 1 naval vessel 180 meters long, 1 naval vessel 120 meters long and 2 probable medium freighters.

At 1400 4 submarines and 2 small freighters were detected off Ochemchiri.

One cruiser and 3 destroyers, course northwest, were intercepted about 10 miles northwest of Anapa.

There were 4 small to medium freighters in Kerch Strait at 1125.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported light naval forces active in the morning: 3 cruisers, 1 flotilla leader and 9 destroyers were detected. Four of these destroyers were off the southern part of the east coast, the 3 cruisers off the central to northern parts, 1 flotilla leader and 1 destroyer off the south coast of the Crimca and 1 destroyer off Sevastopol. Position of the remaining 3 destroyers was not identified. In the afternoon, the old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna" also appeared between Sevastopol and the south Crimcan coast. These naval forces have maintained radio silence since the forenoon. M.T.B.s, motor minesweepers and patrol vessels were also detected off the central part of the east coast and the west Crimcan coast.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimca:

No reports were submitted from the naval port commanders.

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that Theodosia was attacked by enemy planes (no details yet available) and that the enemy force

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which landed near Sudak had put up a stubborn defense as on the previous occasion.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. sent me a report from 4th Air Corps which had not been forwarded to this command. It stated that unusually many enemy ships were lying in Kamish Burun (27,000 tons), while there were only a few ships in Novorossisk. It is assumed that the enemy transferred a considerable number of reinforcements for the front on Kerch Peninsula.

General:

1. Almost all telephone and teletype connections from Bucharest have been interrupted by the severe cold (as low as -29° C) and heavy snow.
2. Naval Special Duties Detachment pointed out that the Rumanian destroyers cannot escort the Italian tanker "Albaro" which is to be transferred to the Bosphorus as their guns are only semi-operational owing to icing-up and they cannot fire torpedoes at all.

The tanker could only proceed unescorted if the weather conditions deteriorated sufficiently to minimize the submarine danger e.g. in snow or fog. I consider it ridiculous to count on this supposition, as our reports on the weather in the southeastern Black Sea are quite incomplete.

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25 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, fair, continuing fog, visibility 1 km., drifting ice, temperature -23° C.

Air reconnaissance reported no shipping traffic between Theodosia and Anapa. Kerch Strait was frozen, but there was an open channel to the harbor of Kamish Burun (see War Diary 24 January).

At 1140 some small vessels were detected in Kerch Strait (no number given). The northern part of Kerch Strait was frozen and columns were marching over the ice (no direction reported; presumably they were reinforcements for the Russian Army front on Kerch headland).

At 1435 4 destroyers or torpedoboats, course east, later course northnorthwest, high speed, were sighted some 80 miles southsouthwest of Novorossisk.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the recently reported naval forces were still at sea but had shifted their focal point to the west.

One old battleship, 2 cruisers, 1 flotilla leader and 5 destroyers were detected in radio traffic between the south coast and Novorossisk.

Three M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers, 6 minesweepers and patrol boats were detected off the west Crimean coast, 2 destroyers in the area off Batum and 1 cruiser some 8 miles west of Cape Khersonese according to an inaccurate radio fix.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No special reports were received from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., Naval Shore Commander "U" or the naval port commanders.

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26 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, overcast, rain, bad visibility, moderate sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports owing to bad weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the naval forces detected yesterday off the northern part of the east coast were obviously still at sea. Two cruisers and 2 destroyers were detected.

Two destroyers, 2 M.T.B.s or motor minesweepers and 7 minesweepers or patrol boats were detected in the Sevastopol area and off the southwest coast of the Crimea. Several submarines were thought to be at sea.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander "U" sent no reports from the areas of the naval port commanders.

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that another enemy landing had taken place near Sudak (1 regiment brought in vessels escorted by 1 destroyer and 3 escort vessels).

A heavy attack on our position was repulsed.

Readiness:

Gunboats "Dumitrescu" and "Chiculcsu" non-operational owing to unserviceable compasses. Duration will be reported later.

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27 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, overcast, rain, bad visibility, moderate sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 6 patrol vessels and 3 submarines off the west Crimean coast, one of them 55 miles southwest of Sevastopol.

Four destroyers, presumably course east, were detected between the Crimea and Novorossisk and 1 destroyer off the southern part of the east coast.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Rumanian Naval Command reported that, according to information from the Rumanian General Staff, 6 large vessels had been sighted, course west, off Sevastopol. We at once informed Special Duties Detachment by Most Immediate radiogram but they had already had the same information from the Command of the 9th Rumanian Division, Constantza.

This Rumanian report was not accurate enough to deduce any enemy landing plans on the Rumanian/Bessarabian or south Russian coast. Presumably the vessels belonged to an ordinary convoy which was putting to sea.

No reports of any special incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders were submitted by Naval Shore Commander "U" or Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q.

General:

Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff ordered that an additional Naval Shore Commander, Crimea would have to be appointed in view of the strategic importance of the Crimea for further land operations. For operational matters he would be subordinated to 11th Army H.Q.

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On the basis of my proposal concerning this matter, Group Command, South decided:

1. The present Naval Shore Commander "U" will take over the tasks of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea. Northern boundary: Crimea as far as the line from Perekop to Gromovka to Genichesk (including these places).
2. Naval Shore Commander "V" will take over the tasks of Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine, that is to say he will command all occupied Russian ports outside the Crimea as far as and including Taganrog.
3. As long as the Crimea remains an operational area, Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will be subordinate to 11th Army H.Q. for operational matters concerning coastal defense and to Admiral, Black Sea as before for discipline, supplies and naval and strategical assignments including sea transportation.
4. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine remains directly subordinate to Admiral, Black Sea.
5. This reorganization must take place as soon as possible. Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea and Ukraine should report time, headquarters and organizational structure, giving strength of forces.

As Naval Shore Commander "V" will be relieved of his original duties on the northeast coast of the Black Sea by this new organization, Group Command will ask Naval High Command to appoint a 3rd Naval Shore Commander in my area of command. The new boundaries of the command areas of the Naval Shore Commanders will then require only slight alterations later.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE. winds, force 5, overcast, haze,
visibility 2 km., moderate sea, temperature
-9° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
1 cruiser in the area off the northern part
of the east coast which presumably put in
to Novorossisk; 1 destroyer off the southern
part of the east coast, several M.T.B.s and
motor minesweepers off the west coast of the
Crimea and some submarines at sea in unidentified
positions.

Radio traffic generally slight.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports were submitted from Naval Shore
Commander "U" or Naval Liaison Office to
11th Army H.Q. concerning the areas of the
various naval port commanders.

Situation:

The transfer of the Italian tanker "Albaro"
which was to take place at 0000 on 29 January
had to be postponed again.

Reasons:

1. Check sweep of the outward route was impossible because of icefields drifting off the coast.
2. While proceeding through the ice, the destroyers would have trouble with their condensers.
3. According to the weather forecasts, the severe cold can be expected to last (-18° C) and the destroyers could then not use their weapons or at least only to a limited extent.
4. The conduct of this escort assignment from Constantza would be uncertain owing to break-downs or interruptions in almost all telephone and teletype communications.

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5. With the present weather, the mist might be expected to lift and the bright moonlight and good visibility would considerably increase the submarine danger.

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29 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 2, no cloud, haze,
visibility 2 km., moderate sea, temperature
-15° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/E Station, Constantza reported
1 cruiser, probably course west, south of
Cape Chauda (Theodosia Bay); 1 flotilla
leader, course north, off the central part
of the east coast; slight activity of patrol
forces off the bases and several submarines
at sea in unidentified positions.

1400 Naval ferry barges Nos. 122 and 134 put out
from Varna for Cavarna.

Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

1150 South Russian Area:

Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported that
at 1130 Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 149
sighted 3 large and 3 small vessels, course
east, 20 miles south of Kobleva. No further
details were reported. Two Rumanian planes
took off at 1225 and about 1530 respectively,
but they sighted no vessels at sea. The
report is being investigated.

Crimea:

No incidents in the areas of the naval port
commanders.

Plans:

In reply to my query (see War Diary 10 January),
Naval Group Command, South decided that, in
view of the Italian need of fuel, the Italian
tanker "Albaro" would have to be transferred
from Constantza to the Bosphorus even if there
were no air reconnaissance. With the approval
of Group Command, I therefore agreed to the
proposal of Naval Special Duties Detachment,
Constantza to have the tanker put out at 0000
on 31 January escorted by destroyers "Regio
Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria". As increasing
cloud has been predicted, this will still be
risky, but the danger from submarines will be
less than during the prevailing bright nights.

CONFIDENTIAL

30 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 4, overcast, snow and fog, visibility up to 1 km., slight sea, temperature -7° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted the following reports today after an interval of several days when planes could not take off because of the danger of freezing:

Batum at 1255 (aerial photograph): 4 destroyers, 1 submarine, 1 auxiliary naval vessel, 6 freighters, totaling 9,000 tons and 16 small vessels.

Poti at 1300: 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser of the "Kirov" class, 5 destroyers, 1 of them in the dock, 1 torpedoboat, 1 auxiliary naval vessel, 6 submarines, 5 freighters totaling 14,000 tons and 16 small vessels.

At 1430 no shipping traffic was observed in the central or eastern Black Sea south of Theodosia as far as Tuapse.

At 1530 Kerch Strait was found to be frozen. No troops were observed. The Sea of Azov was also covered with ice.

Main Naval D/T Station, Constantza reported that 1 old battleship (? see above report of air reconnaissance), 1 cruiser, 1 flotilla leader and 1 submarine were detected off the Crimea, 2 more cruisers off the southern to central parts of the east coast, more submarines at sea in unidentified positions and several M.T.B.s, minesweepers, motor minesweepers and patrol vessels in the Sevastopol, Novorossisk and Batum areas.

Bulgarian Area:

Cavarna at 1700: Additional report for 29 January:

Naval ferry barges Nos. 122 and 134 put in to Cavarna from Varna.

Further passage, planned for 30 January, had to be postponed owing to ice in Constantza harbor.

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Rumanian Area:

The Italian tanker "Albaro", escorted by destroyers "Regelo Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria", put out from Constantza as scheduled on transfer to the Bosphorus. Favorable weather conditions.

Owing to a fault in her oil cooling system, destroyer "Regina Maria" had to abandon the escort duty and return to Constantza.

The transfer to Constantza of the 2 Hungarian motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" which had been loaded and ready to put out since the end of December will be carried out by Naval Special Duties Detachment as soon as escort vessels are available. The transfer was ordered by the Group Command.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimca:

Naval Shore Commander "U" reported that Naval Port Commander, Theodosia had commandeered 12 4.5 cm. captured guns. Four of them are serviceable. On 29 January, the construction of the harbor boom was started.

No incidents in the areas of the other naval port commanders.

CONFIDENTIAL

31 January, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 3, overcast, haze, visibility 2 km., slight sea, temperature -7°.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 medium merchant ship, course east, medium speed, some 15 miles west of Anapa at 1135; at 1210 3 probable M.T.B.s, course castsoutheast, medium speed, some 15 miles south of Anapa.

Batum at 1334 (aerial photograph): training ship "Komintern", 2 destroyers, 2 torpedoboats, 1 submarine, 1 tanker of 8,000 tons, 1 passenger ship of 5,000 tons, 4 freighters, each 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons and 2 small vessels.

Poti at 1345 (aerial photograph): 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser, 1 transport of 8,000 tons and 1 floating dock.

Tuapse at 1420 (visual reconnaissance): 1 cruiser, 1 destroyer, 9 submarines and 2 transports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 destroyer off the northeast coast and several M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers and patrol vessels in the Sevastopol area. Several submarines were at sea; three of them were detected in radio traffic presumably in the western Black Sea.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

1900 Destroyer "Regina Maria" put in to Constantza after escorting tanker "Albaro" without incident. According to information from Naval Attache, Istanbul, the tanker anchored in the Bosphorus at 0800.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

Readiness:

Destroyer "Regina Maria" non-operational for repairs to her oil cooling system. Duration will be reported later.

Tugs "Amsel" and "Forsch" again operational.

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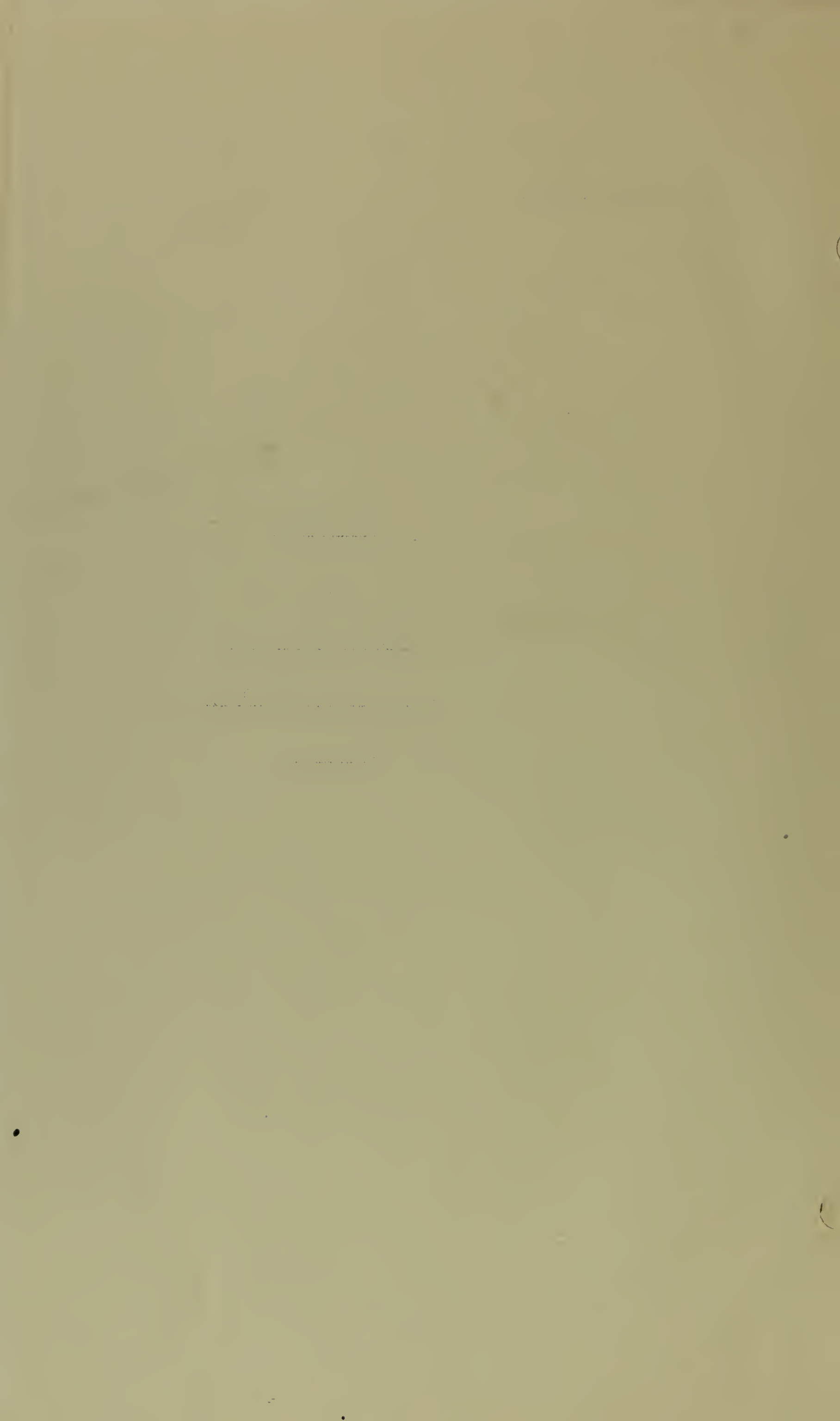
WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 FEBRUARY, 1942

PG/31504



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1 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 2, overcast, slight haze, visibility 10 km., calm sea, temperature -10° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 large transport, lying low in the water, escorted by a submarine, course west, off the coast south of Balaklava at 1045; at 1110 1 steamer with 2 funnels, 3 small steamers and 2 guardboats some 10 miles northwest of Sevastopol making for Cape Khersonose; 2 large freighters putting in to Kruglaya Bay and 2 small freighters putting out; 1 large freighter putting in to Karantinnaya Bay and 1 small naval vessel putting out; 1 light cruiser and 1 large merchant ship putting in to Sevastopol; at 1215 1 large freighter of more than 8,000 tons putting in to Sevastopol escorted by a light cruiser; at 1635 1 tanker off Ghelenjik harbor.

Tuapse at 1425 (visual reconnaissance): 1 heavy cruiser ("Kirov" class), 1 heavy cruiser ("Krasny Kavkas"), 1 light cruiser ("Chervona Ukraina"), 2 destroyers, 11 submarines, 2 tankers totaling 14,000 tons, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, 10 freighters totaling 16,000 tons, and 16 boats.

Poti (aerial photograph): 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser, 1 freighter of 5,000 tons and 1 floating dock.

Batum (aerial photograph): 1 light cruiser, 2 flotilla leaders, 2 destroyers, 1 submarine, 1 tanker of 8,000 tons, 1 passenger ship of 7,000 tons, 1 freighter of 5,500 tons, 4 freighters totaling 6,000 tons, and 2 small ships.

Novorossisk at 1425 (visual observation): 1 destroyer, 1 minesweeper and 11 freighters totaling some 25,000 tons.

The large number of vessels again in Tuapse is striking. This is obviously the main enemy supply port now and also their most important naval base.

Convoy traffic off Sevastopol was also lively.

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General:

To ensure that air reconnaissance reports are passed on as quickly as possible, Naval Communications Liaison Officer has at his own request been seconded with his radio personnel from 4th Air Corps to 4th Air Force. The latter has control over 4th Air Corps for assignments over land and over 5th Air Corps for sea reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser and 1 submarine off Sevastopol, M.T.B.s, motor minesweepers and patrol boats off the west coast of the Crimea and continued submarine activity. At least 3 submarines were detected in the western to southwestern Black Sea.

0915

Special Duties Detachment reported that quarters No. 1 in Camp Abador belonging to Naval Communications Officer, Constantza had been destroyed by fire. All fixtures, clothing and equipment were lost, but there were no casualties. Further details later. No question of sabotage.

Bulgarian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

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2 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 2, overcast, moderate haze, visibility 2 km., calm sea, temperature -5° C.

Air reconnaissance was impossible because of the weather. However, 4th Air Force and Naval Communications Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force sent in many reports which were obviously observations made by German Army troops near Sevastopol. They stated that there was lively convoy traffic to and from Sevastopol. This seemed to indicate that the enemy was bringing up considerable reinforcements.

Main Naval D/E Station, Constantza reported 1 destroyer and 1 minesweeper off the central part of the east coast, 1 flotilla leader and 1 destroyer off the northern part to the east coast of the Crimea and many minesweepers and patrol vessels off Sevastopol. Five submarines were intercepted at sea, two of which were westsouthwest of the southern tip of the Crimea in the evening.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. inquired by Most Immediate radiogram what help the Rumanian naval forces could offer when the attack on Sevastopol was resumed. In the reply which I sent with copy to Naval Group Command, South and Naval Special Duties Detachment, I pointed out to Naval Liaison Officer that no support could be given by the Rumanian Navy.

Reasons:

1. They have at their disposal 2 or at the most 3 destroyers which are very liable to break down and are inferior to all the enemy's destroyers. They have no U-boats as "Delfinul" will be non-operational until approximately the middle of April and only 1 E-boat which owing to inadequate endurance cannot operate alone.

Enemy forces are as follows:

1 battleship, at least 4 cruisers, 15 destroyers

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including some flotilla leaders, about 40 submarines and many M.T.B.s. In addition to Sevastopol, the enemy has operational bases in the eastern Black Sea.

2. Torpedo or gun operations by the destroyers in face of the obviously superior enemy defenses would be hopeless. In any case, even chance successes would have little effect on the ratio of forces, and in all probability such operations would mean irreplaceable Rumanian losses.
3. In face of the strong enemy defenses and completely unknown enemy mine situation, minelaying operations would entail full-scale employment of the 2 mine-carriers and the escorting destroyers and would in all probability offer very slight prospects of success. As the enemy has a splendid sweeping procedure and minesweeping could be uninterruptedly carried out under cover of naval forces, the laying of mincfields would at best achieve only a temporary disruption of enemy supply traffic or evacuation ships.
4. Every operation, not to mention loss, of our destroyers would temporarily or permanently stop our sea supplies. This, both in my opinion and Group Command's, is the main task of our naval forces and is decisive for the Army operations planned by Army Group South for the spring. Moreover, any other destroyer operations would entail a splitting-up of our forces at the very moment when the general situation requires them to be concentrated in the crucial area.
5. I finally pointed out to Naval Liaison Officer that no change could be effected in the naval situation in the Black Sea by bringing up German naval forces by the date in question.

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3 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

ENE winds, force 6, overcast, moderate haze, visibility 4 km., very rough sea, temperature -2° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following:

Poti at 1252 (aerial photograph): 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser ("Kirov" class), 1 cruiser (probably "Krasny" class), 4 destroyers and 1 freighter of 8,000 tons.

Ochemchiri at 1302: 7 submarines and 2 probable submarine tenders.

There were only a few other reports on unimportant shipping movements off the east coast and near Sevastopol.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 flotilla leader and some patrol vessels in the Sevastopol area, 2 or 3 submarines between Yalta and Cape Chauda and 1 destroyer off the northern part of the east coast. Radio traffic generally slight.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimoea:

No incidents.

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4 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 5, overcast, visibility
10 km., rough sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance was again inexhaustive
owing to the weather. Only the following
reports were received:

Sevastopol at 0815: 2 medium merchant ships
putting out and at 1245 1 medium merchant
ship putting out. 14 large and medium
freighters were lying stopped off Kamish
Burun at 1303 (obviously for bringing up
more reinforcements).

About 7 miles northwest of Balaklava there was
1 small merchant ship, course 090°, at 1317.

11th Army H.Q. pointed out in their situation
report for 3 February which I received today
that the recent unfavorable weather had
prevented full-scale air operations and that
as a result the enemy had succeeded in bringing
up reinforcements and supplies undisturbed both
across the frozen Kerch Strait to the front
northeast of Theodosia and by sea to Sevastopol.
According to today's report from Naval Liaison
Officer to 11th Army H.Q., this supply traffic
to both fronts is continuing today.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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5 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 5, overcast, good visibility, moderate sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance had few reports to submit because of the weather. From these, it is apparent that supply traffic continued in Kerch Strait and on the route to Sevastopol. These observations were confirmed by the report for the day from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 4 destroyers and probably the old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna" off the northern to central parts of the east coast. There were also 2 submarines at sea, one of which was inexactly located some 100 - 110 miles south-east of Constantza.

Slight activity of defense forces off Sevastopol and Novorossisk.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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6 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 3, slight haze, visibility 1 km., slight sea, temperature -8° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 2 large freighters escorted by a small naval vessel putting in to Sevastopol at 0955.

Kerch at 1345: 1 probable auxiliary naval vessel, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons and 8 small ships ice-bound in the harbor.

The report for the day from 11th Army H.Q. also confirmed the heavier shipping traffic in Sevastopol harbor and reckoned that the enemy attack would begin on 7 February.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 flotilla leader off the southern part of the east coast, 1 cruiser, 1 flotilla leader and 1 submarine off the central to northern parts of the east coast and 3 submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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7 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSE winds, force 2, overcast, slight fog,
visibility 1 km., masses of slush ice,
temperature 1° C.

Air reconnaissance could not be flown because
of the weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
that radio traffic was generally slight.
Five submarines were detected in the western
Black Sea, one of which was about 35 miles
south of Cape Chauda at 0400. One destroyer
was intercepted 5 miles south of Uskut (south
coast of the Crimea).

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea

No incidents.

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8 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, thick fog, visibility
200 meters, drift ice, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted only 2 reports:

Sevastopol at 0730: 6 freighters putting in,
7 freighters putting out with air escort and
3 freighters with fighter escort putting in.

From these 2 reports, it is again evident
that Sevastopol is still receiving seaborne
supplies. Probably the convoys with air
escort consisted of ships with very valuable
cargo (troops, tanks or fuel).

1745 Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force
reported the following undated, unconfirmed
agent's report by telephone:

"A large formation of 22 ships put out from
Sochi for Sevastopol!"

The report seems hardly credible. I
cannot believe that a formation of 22 supply
ships would put out from the small harbor at
Sochi. The report perhaps refers to 22 small
vessels or boats. Of course, it may be that
the convoy put out from Poti originally and
assembled in Sochi to continue via the open
sea to Sevastopol.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located
1 probable cruiser some 30 miles south of
Sevastopol at 0750. She was in radio
communication with the old battleship and
other cruisers whose positions were not
identified. Three destroyers were detected
between the Crimea and the northern part of the
east coast in the afternoon and evening.
Further destroyers were at sea in unidentified
positions.

Lively radio traffic by patrol vessels off the
various bases. No submarines located.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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9 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, visibility 500 meters, fog, drift ice, temperature -2° C.

Air reconnaissance again reported lively supply traffic to and from Sevastopol. No reconnaissance of the sea area between the Crimea and the east coast was possible because of the weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 probable cruiser off the southwest coast of the Crimea, 2 destroyers 60 miles southwest of Sevastopol, 1 cruiser (probably "Voroshilov") and 1 destroyer off the east coast of the Crimea, 1 destroyer off the central part of the east coast and 1 destroyer off the southern part. Lively activity of patrol forces off the bases.

Bulgarian Area:

1605 Naval Special Command, Bulgaria reported by Most Immediate radiogram 1526/74 that 3 ships in line ahead, course northeast, had been sighted from Ahtopol bearing 125° . They were just within visual range. (Ahtopol is near the Turkish frontier.)

1750 Naval Special Command reported that 5 ships in all had been sighted at 1430, first in line abreast, then in line ahead. The leading ship was much larger than the other 4 ships.

1510 Three explosions were heard but neither the direction nor cause could be ascertained. The ships then disappeared in the fog.

There is every reason to believe that this was an enemy minelaying operation.

Naval Special Command was directed to check the above-mentioned area for mines as soon as possible.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimca:

Naval Port Commander 8 reported 6 enemy air attacks on the coast near Sadki (east of Eupatoria). No damage. No special incidents

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in the areas of the other naval port commanders.

Bucharest: As Vice-Admiral Fleischer has been granted sick leave until 10 April 1942, I assumed the duties of Admiral, Black Sea today.

(Signed) Götting.

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10 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

ENE winds, force 2, overcast, visibility 500 meters, thick fog, masses of drift ice, temperature 0°.

Air reconnaissance reports showed continuing supply traffic with strong escorts to and from Sevastopol. Several large freighters of more than 3,000 tons were reported. The report for the day from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. also mentioned lively shipping movements off Sevastopol.

Further air reconnaissance reports indicated moderate convoy traffic in the Kerch Strait area.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 flotilla leader and 8 - 10 minesweepers and patrol boats on escort duty in the Sevastopol area, 1 destroyer off Kerch and 2 destroyers, 2 submarines, some minesweepers, M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers off the northern part of the east coast. The large vessel (probably a cruiser) which has been reported in the central Black Sea during the past two days was presumed to be proceeding to the east coast.

The old battleship was probably in the Batum area.

There were some cruisers and submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

1550 Gunboats "Dunitrescu" and "Chiculcsu" put out from Constantza to take supplies to the island of Fidonisi.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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11 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 2, overcast, visibility 4 km., heavy mist, drift ice, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continuation of escorted convoy traffic in the Sevastopol area and near Kerch. No reports were received on the rest of the Black Sea.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser (probably "Voroshilov") which had been at sea since 9 February was located some 60 miles south of Cape Meganom at 1700, mean course probably west.

One destroyer was detected off the west coast of the Crimea and 2 submarines appeared in the western Black Sea. Three destroyers and 1 submarine were intercepted off the northern part of the east coast in the forenoon. The large cruiser, which yesterday seemed to be proceeding east, was today discovered with 1 destroyer off the central part of the east coast, probably course north.

Off the southern part, there were 2 destroyers, course north, which seemed to be converging on a large northbound vessel. Also several submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

- 0300 A loud explosion was heard north of St. Konstantin (Varna Bay). Later, Bulgarian pickets reported engine noises. The area was searched for mines in the course of the day, as was the area off Achtopol (near the Turkish frontier) where on 9 February (see War Diary) 5 unidentified vessels were sighted and some explosions heard. No results of the check sweeps have been reported.
- 1040 Naval ferry barges F 123 and F 124 which were destined for the Aegean put out from Varna for the Bosphorus, camouflaged as "Trabzon" and "Manissa". They were escorted as far as the Turkish - Bulgarian frontier by 2 Bulgarian E-boats.
- 1430 The 2 naval ferry barges passed Nos Emine (about 35 miles south of Varna).

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Rumanian Area:

1300 Gunboats "Dumitrescu" and "Chiculescu" put in to Constantza again as "Dumitrescu" had been slightly damaged by ice. A Rumanian tug had meanwhile carried supplies to the island of Fidonisi.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Dumitrescu" docked with ice damage and is non-operational. Duration will be reported later.

General:

At a conference in Bucharest, Quartermaster, Rumania (subordinate to Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea) pointed out that, in view of the constant difficulties of overland supply traffic, it was vital that sea traffic should be organized again as soon as possible. In his opinion, the operations planned by Army Group South for the spring are quite out of the question unless there is adequate sea supply traffic. This confirms my statement (see War Diary 2 February) in reply to the inquiry from 11th Army H.Q. regarding naval support for attacks on Sevastopol.

I informed Group Command, South and Special Duties Detachment of the view of Quartermaster, Rumania.

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12 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNW winds, force 3, overcast, visibility
2 km., drift ice, temperature 0°.

Air reconnaissance submitted a few reports
only:

Sevastopol at 0730: 1 light cruiser putting
in.

Tuapse at 1350: 3 probable destroyers and
1 large merchant ship; several submarines
about 85 miles west of Tuapse at 1038.

Novorossisk at 1235: 6 medium and 8 small
merchant ships; 1 convoy, course 150°, off the
harbor.

Sukhum at 1300: 2 freighters and several
small naval vessels.

Anapa at 1309: 1 convoy of 4 freighters,
course northwest, about 5 miles northwest
of Anapa.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
1 submarine and several patrol vessels off
the west and southwest coasts of the Crimea
and 2 destroyers off the south coast of the
Crimea, one of which was detected some
80 miles south of Cape Ayu Dagh at 1600.
The large vessel (probably a destroyer)
reported yesterday off the central part of
the east coast is also thought to be near
there with destroyers.

Throughout the day there were 2 - 3 submarines
off the northern part of the east coast.

Off the central to southern parts of the east
coast were 2 destroyers, one of which was in
the Sukhum area at 0513. Several more
submarines were at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

The check sweeps in Varna Bay and near
Ahtopol (see War Diary 9 and 11 February)
were without result. Minesweeping was
continued today, but so far no reports have
been submitted.

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Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

South Russian Area:

Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force reported that air reconnaissance had found Karkinitzki Bay frozen. Off the north coast and the south coast as far as Bakal, there was fast ice generally 3 km. wide with a surrounding strip of soft ice.

Enemy landings near Klarovka, which would at other times be a suitable area, seem highly unlikely as long as the frost continues.

Crimea:

No incidents.

Readiness:

Cunboat "Dumitrescu" non-operational for routine dockyard period.

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13 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 3, visibility 200 miles,
smooth sea, temperature 0°.

Air reconnaissance again submitted a few
reports only:

Sevastopol at 0745: 1 large merchant ship
putting in. No shipping traffic at 0938.
At 1410 2 medium freighters put in to
Sevastopol.

No shipping traffic between Batum and
Ghelenjik from 1200 to 1420.

Batum: 1 cruiser and 3 freighters totaling
about 5,000 tons.

Tuapse: 3 destroyers and 3 freighters
totaling about 4,000 tons.

Batum (aerial photograph): 4 destroyers,
1 submarine, 2 tankers totaling 13,000 tons,
5 freighters and passenger ships totaling
about 18,000 tons.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
4 destroyers off the west and southwest coasts
of the Crimea, 1 cruiser ("Voroshilov"?)
putting out from Sevastopol in the evening,
1 destroyer off the south coast of the Crimea,
1 submarine tender and 1 submarine with 5
patrol vessels off the central part of the
east coast of the Black Sea, 1 destroyer,
1 submarine and 3 patrol vessels off the
southern part and 3 destroyers and 3 submarines
at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

Supplementary report for 12 February: The
check sweep in the northern part of Varna Bay
was again without result. No report on today's
sweep off Achtopol has so far been submitted.

Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimca:

No incidents.

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14 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 2, overcast, visibility 1 km., slight sea, temperature 0°.

Air reconnaissance was not flown because of the weather.

Main Naval D/P Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser ("Voroshilov"?) reported as putting out yesterday evening was about 30 miles south of Balaklava at 1020 and 24 miles southwest at 1316.

One destroyer, 3 submarines and 8 minesweepers were detected in the Sevastopol area, 1 destroyer and 2 submarines off the northern part of the east coast, 1 cruiser, probably course north, in the Tuapse area and 1 cruiser and 1 submarine off the southern part of the east coast. Also 1 destroyer and 2 submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

At 2035 on 13 February and between 0430 and 0530 today, 1 - 5 explosions were heard at sea from Varna. As hardly any ice was reported at sea, it is unlikely that they were mine explosions. When the weather improves, the entire area off Varna where we suspect a recent enemy minelaying operation will be checked by air reconnaissance.

The check sweep off Achtopol on 13 February was again without result. Today's report has not yet been submitted.

Rumanian Area:

0620 Gunboat "Chiculescu" put out from Constantza for Sulina with the 2 tugs "Bessarabia" and "Forsch".

1050 They put in again because of fog.

Odessa was alerted by the Rumanian town commandant after captured partisans reported that the enemy intended to land in the Odessa area very soon.

A report from Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force pointed out that there was no reliable information on such landing plans. The matter

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will be investigated.

At the present stage in the war, landings in the Odessa area or on the Bessarabian coast seem highly improbable. If any further enemy landings are intended, they would be more likely to be on the north coast of Karkinitzki Bay, where at present the ice situation precludes any action (see War Diary 13 February).

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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15 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 2, overcast, fog, visibility 1 km., calm sea, temperature 0°.

Air reconnaissance submitted only 2 reports:

1 small and 2 medium freighters at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait at 1130. Kerch Strait is free of ice as far as the line from Ak Burnu to Kossa Tuszla: north of the line there is drift ice.

Sevastopol at 1715: 2 light cruisers and 1 torpedoboat putting in.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 submarines off the southwest coast of the Crimea, 1 submarine off the south coast of the Crimea, 1 destroyer off the northern part of the east coast of the Black Sea, 1 destroyer off the southern part and 1 cruiser, 1 submarine tender and 2 submarines at sea in unidentified positions. Usual traffic of minesweepers and patrol forces near the bases.

Bulgarian Area:

According to another report from Special Command, Bulgaria, there have been icefields up to 50 cm. thick in Varna Bay for 3 days since the wind dropped. Contrary to my statement of 14 February, this may account for the mine explosions heard in the last few days.

Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

With the Chief of Staff and 3rd Admiral's Staff Officer, I left Bucharest for Sofia for a conference with Group Command, South.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea (Admiral Graf von Schweinitz) reported from Nikolaiev that he had transferred the duties of the previous Naval Shore Commander "U" to the new Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine (Admiral Kopp).

(Signed) Cötting.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 28 FEBRUARY, 1942

PG/31505

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16 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 5, overcast, mist and fog, visibility 1 km., drift ice, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted only two reports because of the weather: 1 medium and 4 small ships proceeding to Sevastopol.

It appears from the daily report from 11th Army H.Q. that there is still lively shipping traffic in Sevastopol harbor.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser ("Voroshilov") and 2 destroyers off the southwest coast of the Crimea, 1 submarine off the south Crimean coast near Cape Ayu Dagh in the morning, 1 submarine off Alushta at 1945, 1 cruiser off the northern part of the east coast of the Black Sea near Ghelenjik at 1007, 1 submarine and 1 destroyer nearby, 1 destroyer off the central part of the east coast, 3 submarines off the southern part and 1 cruiser and 1 submarine at sea in unidentified positions. Also radio traffic by mincsweepers and patrol forces off the bases.

Bulgarian Area:

Varna reported that further check sweeps off Achtopol brought no confirmation of the suspected enemy minelaying operations (see War Diary 15 February).

Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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17 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No report was submitted.

Air reconnaissance reported continuing heavy convoy traffic with escorts in the Sevastopol area.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza also reported lively activity of patrol and escort forces in the Sevastopol area.

The following were also detected in the same area:

1 cruiser and 1 destroyer, probably returning to the east coast about 2000, and 3 submarines.

Off the south Crimean coast there was 1 submarine and about 15 miles south of Kerch Strait another. One destroyer and 2 submarines were detected off the northern part of the east coast, 3 destroyers off the southern part and 1 cruiser and 1 submarine at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0800 Gunboat "Chiculescu" put out from Constantza for Sulina with tugs "Bessarabia" and "Forsch" to transfer personnel and provisions and bring back 1 sick man.

1500 They put in again as it was impossible to continue to Sulina because of the ice.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

General:

The continued slight frost has so far made no change in the ice situation off the Bessarabian coast and the northwest coast of the Crimea. There is still thick fast ice, particularly in Odessa harbor and in the Bug and the Dnieper. Large and small drifting icefields such as were reported off Varna Bay on 15 February must be expected at sea. It is therefore still impossible to have the Danube Flotilla check the supply routes.

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18 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 4, overcast, good to moderate visibility, temperature 00 C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports from the Sevastopol area today, but for the first time for long enough the eastern Black Sea was reconnoitered. The following reports were sent in on the basis of aerial photographs:

Tuapse at 1221: 1 heavy cruiser, 9 submarines, 1 flotilla leader, 1 destroyer and 8 freighters totaling about 1,500 tons (tonnage uncertain owing to mist).

Sukhum at 1240: 9 probable M.T.B.s and 1 probable M.T.B. tender.

Sochi at 1309: 14 small harbor vessels.

Novorossisk at 1338: 1 old battleship ("Parishkaya Kommuna").

The rest of this photograph was out of focus.

Ochemchiri at 1340: 4 submarines and 2 submarine tenders.

The following traffic was sighted in the eastern Black Sea:

At 1317 2 M.T.B.s, course northwest, and 2 M.T.B.s, course southeast, some 10 miles southeast of Tuapse; at 1320 4 medium freighters off Tuapse; at 1328 2 medium freighters, course northwest, high speed, 10 miles south of Ghelenjik; at 1355 1 large freighter, course southeast, medium speed, some 10 miles west of Novorossisk.

No definite conclusions can be drawn from today's air reconnaissance reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 5 submarines off Sevastopol and in the western Black Sea, 2 destroyers off the northern and southern parts of the east coast and 1 submarine at sea in an unidentified position. Also slight activity of patrol forces in the Sevastopol area.

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping activity off Varna because of drift ice.

Rumanian Area:

Naval Command, Constantza reported that the sea area off Constantza had been free of drift ice from 13 to 15 February and that no mine explosions had been observed during this period. We can therefore take it for granted that the many explosions heard during the month of January were caused by drift ice detonating the mines.

2000

Commanding Admiral returned to Bucharest from Sofia accompanied by Chief of Staff and 3rd Admiral's Staff Officer.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that he had arrived in Simferopol.

CONFIDENTIAL

19 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

WNE winds, force 5, overcast, misty,
visibility 5 km., slight sea, temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force) reported
1 M.T.B. and 1 tug putting in to Sevastopol
at 1100 and 4 warships (no exact details)
putting out at 1400.

Many aerial photographs provided the following
information:

Novorossisk at 0845: 1 battleship, 1 large
destroyer, 5 destroyers, 5 torpedoboats,
2 docks, 1 tanker of approximately 6,500 tons,
and 29 freighters totaling about 54,000 tons.
Also 50 small harbor vessels. The harbor
entrance is protected by a barrage of buoys.

Anapa at 0850: 8 small vessels.

Tuapse at 0910: 1 heavy cruiser, 1 heavy (?)
cruiser fitting out, 1 large destroyer,
2 destroyers, 7 submarines, 2 tankers totaling
about 13,500 tons, 10 freighters totaling about
32,000 tons, and 24 small vessels.

The large number of ships in Novorossisk
indicates either enemy plans to bring up
considerable reinforcements to Kerch Peninsula
or further landing operations. Air reconnais-
sance also reported the following shipping
traffic:

At 0831 1 freighter of some 4,000 tons, course
northeast, and 1 freighter of about 1,500 tons,
course east, south of Kerch Strait; at 0848
4 M.T.B.s, course southwest, and 2 freighters
totaling about 2,000 tons, course southeast,
off Novorossisk.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
2 destroyers between the Crimea and the
northern part of the east coast, 1 cruiser,
2 destroyers and 1 submarine off the central
to southern parts of the east coast and
1 destroyer off Sevastopol. Lively activity
of patrol forces in the Novorossisk area in
the forenoon.

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping activity in Varna Bay because
of drift ice.

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Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

0250 Two warships lying southeast of Eupatoria shelled Sadki airfield (about 25 km. east-southeast of Eupatoria) with 30 - 40 rounds of medium-caliber shells.

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20 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 5, squalls, overcast, visibility 8 km., misty, moderate sea, isolated patches of drift ice, temperature -4° C.

Air reconnaissance again reported some heavily escorted convoy traffic in the Sevastopol area, including 1 large merchant ship, escorted by 4 escort vessels and 1 light cruiser, putting in to harbor at 1125.

Aerial photographs provided the following information:

Novorossisk at 1055: 1 battleship, 1 large destroyer, 4 destroyers, 3 torpedoboats, 1 submarine, 3 minesweepers, 2 floating docks, 1 tanker of 6,500 tons and 33 freighters totaling about 30,000 tons.

Tuapse at 1115: 1 heavy cruiser ("Kirov" class), 1 probable heavy cruiser fitting out, 1 large destroyer, 2 destroyers, 9 submarines, 2 torpedoboats, 2 tankers totaling 13,500 tons and 9 freighters totaling about 25,000 tons.

Sochi at 1126: 3 M.T.B.s.

Ochomchiri at 1152: 6 submarines, 9 M.T.B.s and 2 probable submarine tenders totaling about 3,000 tons.

Poti at 1204: 1 heavy cruiser (probably "Krasny Kavkas" or "Kirov" class), 4 destroyers, 3 torpedoboats, 9 submarines, 2 minesweepers and 3 freighters totaling 15,000 tons.

Batum at 1218: Training ship "Komintern", 4 large destroyers (3 fitting out), 1 submarine, 1 tanker of about 10,000 tons and 5 freighters totaling 16,000 tons.

Kerch at 1236: 1 freighter of about 5,000 tons in the eastern part of the harbor. No other vessels identified. No ice in the harbor.

The number of vessels reported in Novorossisk has increased since yesterday. In view of this and other reports, 11th Army H.Q. is reported by Naval Liaison Officer to be expecting further enemy landing operations (see War Diary 19 February).

The attack on the Sevastopol front is expected to begin on 23 February.

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Main Naval D/E Station, Constantza reported lively activity of patrol vessels and mine-sweepers off Sevastopol and Novorossisk in the afternoon. There were 5 submarines in the Sevastopol area and in the western Black Sea.

At 1500 1 cruiser, probably proceeding from Sevastopol, was detected in the Novorossisk area with 1 submarine.

Off the southern part of the east coast there was 1 destroyer, while another destroyer and 1 submarine were detected in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Supplementary report for 19 February:

Naval Harbor Master, Genichesk reported that a strong Russian detachment was observed proceeding northwest on the Arabatzkaya headland. (Source of this information not given: no further details reported.)

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21 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 6, overcast, visibility 5 km.,
slight mist, moderate sea, temperature -4° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted only a few reports.

Sevastopol at 0917: 1 light cruiser and 5 small
merchant ships (no further details); at 1315
1 medium merchant ship putting out in the north
bay and 5 medium merchant ships at anchor in
the south bay.

Kerch at 1143: 8 freighters totaling about
9,000 tons, and 12 small vessels.

Kamish Burun at 1144: 1 merchant ship and
2 small vessels.

At 1330 1 destroyer and 1 torpedoboat, course
southsoutheast, medium speed, were detected
30 miles west of Tuapse.

Novorossisk at 1340: 1 battleship and 2 large
and 10 small merchant ships (visual reconnaissance
report which in no way agrees with yesterday's
aerial photograph).

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
only slight radio activity: 1 large vessel in
the Tuapse area in the forenoon, 1 cruiser,
probably course west, off Tuapse at 0944 and
1 destroyer off the northern part of the east
coast in the early morning. Normal activity
of patrol forces. No submarines intercepted.

Bulgarian/Rumanian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

South Russian Area:

0515

Naval Control Service Office, Skadovsk reported
gun flashes and flashing signals in a west-
southwesterly direction. No further reports
were submitted. The report is being investigated.

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22 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 4, overcast, visibility
10 km., sea 3, temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following:

Sevastopol at 0900: 4 small destroyers and
10 medium merchant ships. No reports of
convoy traffic to or from Sevastopol.

Kamish Burun at 1013: 3 freighters totaling
about 10,000 tons, and 4 small vessels.

Kerch at 1015: 8 freighters totaling about
9,000 tons, and 12 small vessels.

Novorossisk at 1200 (aerial photograph):
1 battleship, 1 flotilla leader, 3 destroyers
(one without bow), 2 tankers, each about
5,000 tons, 7 freighters totaling about 30,000
tons, and 15 small freighters.

Compared with the last photographs taken of
Novorossisk (see War Diary 20 February), today's
photograph shows a considerable reduction in
the number of vessels in port.

Tuapse at 1200 (incomplete view): 3 destroyers,
1 freighter of about 8,000 tons and 3 freighters
totaling about 5,000 tons.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
the old battleship and 1 cruiser at sea since
noon, the latter probably in the Sevastopol
area where another cruiser and 2 destroyers
were identified in the forenoon; 1 destroyer
off the northern part of the east coast.

Submarines detected: 7 in the Sevastopol area
or in the western Black Sea, 3 off the east
coast in radio communication with 1 submarine
tender which was about 60 miles southeast of
Theodosia at 2300 and 1 submarine in the Batum
area.

Lively activity of patrol forces in the Sevastopol
area since 1300.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

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Situation:

Reports from various stations seem to indicate that the enemy plans to land in the Crimea and Odessa in the next few days in addition to attacking on the Sevastopol and Kerch fronts. This belief is confirmed by a report from G.I.S. Station, Rumania.

This reports has been forwarded to all competent German and Rumanian offices and increased readiness and sharper lookout have been ordered.

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23 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, no cloud, visibility 10 km.,
calm sea, temperature -5° C.

Air reconnaissance reported the following:

Sevastopol at 0900: 10 small to medium
freighters and 4 destroyers; at 0935 1 medium
freighter off the harbor.

Kerch at 1120 (aerial photograph):
1 tanker of 4,000 tons and 24 small merchant
ships totaling about 10,000 tons.

At 2250 a Most Immediate teletype was sent
from Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force
(Bucharest):

4th Air Force, Operations Division wired:
1 battleship and 1 light cruiser in grid
square 34394 (some 80 miles south of Sevastopol),
course west, at 1720. This important message
was inexplicably delayed, but it was at once
passed on by Most Immediate radiogram "To all",
since, considering today's reports from Main
Naval D/F Station, Constantza, it might mean
that the enemy intended to operate against
the Rumanian or South Russian area.

After 2400 another report (radiogram 2207/9)
was received from 4th Air Force stating that
the battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna" and
1 light cruiser had been in grid square 4439
(some 70 miles southeast of Sevastopol) at
1500 and in grid square 34394 (some 8 miles
south of Sevastopol cf. above) at 1720.

No reports were received on vessels in port
or shipping traffic off the east coast.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported in
radiogram 0744/66: Almost complete radio
silence since morning.

On the basis of previous experiences, this
might indicate an imminent enemy operation.
The report was passed in a Most Immediate
radiogram "To all" and increased alertness
ordered. Constantza also reported that today
enemy naval forces had only been heard tuned
for reception: 1 cruiser in the Sevastopol
area in the forenoon and 1 destroyer in the
evening; 1 large vessel at sea in an unidentified
position; 1 destroyer off the central part of
the east coast.

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Some submarines were intercepted in the Sevastopol area and some in the western Black Sea.

Lively activity of patrol forces in the Sevastopol area and off the northern part of the east coast.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Port Commander, Theodosia reported air attacks on the harbor during the night. No losses.

Sevastopol and Kerch fronts: According to a report from 11th Army H.Q., the enemy has not yet launched the expected attack. Army H.Q. presumes that it has been delayed by supply difficulties, particularly at the Kerch front. According to a statement made by a captured Russian officer, the attack is to be postponed until 3 or 4 March. The same prisoner mentioned plans for landing at Eupatoria, Yalta and Theodosia in conjunction with the Army operations.

CONFIDENTIAL

24 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSE winds, force 4, slight cloud, visibility 10 km., slight sea, loose drift ice, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continuing convoy traffic to and from Sevastopol.

Sevastopol (aerial photograph): 1 light cruiser ("Chervona Ukraina"), 1 probable training ship ("Komintern"), 1 destroyer, 1 torpedoboat, 2 more warships (no details of types) and 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons.

According to a visual reconnaissance report, there were also 18 smaller freighters in Sevastopol harbor.

At 1210 1 destroyer, 1 tanker of about 6,000 tons and 1 medium freighter, course 210°, were detected 75 miles south of Theodosia. No shipping traffic was observed between the southern tip of the Crimea and Novorossisk at 1410.

Kerch at 1120 (visual reconnaissance): 1 tanker of about 5,000 tons and 15 small freighters.

Novorossisk at 1400 (aerial photograph): Battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna", 1 flotilla leader, 3 destroyers and 2 docks. Same merchant ships as on 22 February.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported at 1145 that the Russian Fleet was again only tuned for reception. There was still 1 cruiser in the Sevastopol area and 1 large vessel was detected off Novorossisk (probably the old battleship which according to the aerial photograph was back in Novorossisk harbor at 1400).

At 2000 the cruiser transmitted for the first time from the Sevastopol area. In the same area and off the southeast coast of the Crimea, there were 5 submarines. One destroyer was at sea in an unidentified position. Less activity of patrol forces than on previous days.

This report from Constantza, the air reconnaissance reports and the report for the day from 11th Army H.Q., according to which the expected attack

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on the Sevastopol front has not yet been launched, indicate that the enemy has postponed the whole operation (see statement of captured Russian officer, War Diary 23 February).

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

Supplementary report for 23 February:

The radar station which Group Command, South decided to transfer to the Aegean was dismantled on 23 February.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Harbor Master, Genichesk reported that further investigation of the Arabatzkaya headland (see War Diary 20 February) had brought no confirmation of the report of a strong enemy force proceeding to the northwest.

Naval Port Commander, Ak Mechet assumed his duties on 24 February.

On 23 February, a land mine exploded, killing one man and wounding another in Naval Port Command, Ak Mechet.

Naval Radio Station, Theodosia started up on 24 February.

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25 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 4, cloudy, visibility 10 km., moderate sea, temperature 5° C.

Air reconnaissance reported 2 medium warships putting in to Sevastopol from the northwest in the bay east of Cape Khersonese; at 1435 2 medium freighters and 2 escort vessels, course 180°, about 50 miles south of Sevastopol; at 1613 this convoy was about 65 miles southwest of Sevastopol on reverse course (probably the formation had previously been steering 180° to avoid putting in to Sevastopol before dark); at 1315 1 convoy comprising 1 tanker of 8,000 tons, 1 medium freighter and 2 M.T.B.s, course northnorthwest, slight speed, some 25 miles south of Cape Sarich; at 1210 1 tanker, 1 freighter and 2 destroyers, course 210°, about 85 miles south of Theodosia.

Kamish Burun at 1216: 1 medium freighter in the harbor and 2 medium freighters outside.

Anapa at 1245: 6 small freighters totaling 1,500 tons.

No reports were received on shipping in the main ports on the east coast.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser detected yesterday in the Sevastopol area had proceeded to the east and was off Tuapse at 0900. There was 1 probable flotilla leader in the Sevastopol area and 2 destroyers were intercepted off the southeast coast of the Crimea. Submarines detected: 1 60 miles south of Theodosia at 0200, 1 90 miles westsouthwest of Cape Khersonese at 0500, 1 off the southern tip of the Crimea at 1800 and 3 in the Sevastopol area or the western Black Sea.

Lively activity of patrol vessels and mine-sweepers in the Sevastopol area in the afternoon.

Today's air reconnaissance reports and reports from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza indicate that the enemy has postponed the expected operations. The report for the day from 11th Army H.Q. also mentions that the Russian attack has been postponed until 3 or 4 March, apparently because of supply difficulties (see War Diary 23 February).

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Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping activity off Varna because of drift ice.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Because of the thaw on the airfields, the ice reconnaissance agreed on with 4th Air Force, Operations Division cannot be flown in the Odessa - Constantza area.

This reconnaissance may be undertaken by Rumanian planes now in Odessa.

Crimea:

1545

According to a report from a guard, a submarine periscope was sighted south of Yalta mole some 800 meters from the coast.

CONFIDENTIAL

26 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 3, no cloud, visibility 10 km., moderate sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted only a few reports because of the weather. Supply traffic to Sevastopol continues.

Sevastopol (aerial photograph): 1 tanker of 7,000 - 8,000 tons, 1 freighter of 2,000 - 3,000 tons, 5 small freighters, 2 destroyers, 2 submarines and 1 patrol boat.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted 2 cruisers, another probable destroyer and 2 flotilla leaders in the Sevastopol area, 1 destroyer off the northern part of the east coast and 1 cruiser off Tuapse.

Submarines detected: 5 in the Sevastopol area, 2 probably returning to the east coast and 1 proceeding west from the northern part of the east coast. Lively radio traffic by patrol forces in the afternoon and evening, particularly in the Sevastopol area.

Bulgarian Area:

The northern entrance to Varna Bay was checked for mines without result. No drift ice encountered.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Port Commander, Yalta reported that a surfaced enemy submarine was sighted at 1000 between Alupka and Misher (about 8 miles southwest of Yalta) some 2 miles from the coast. Anti-tank guns fired at her and she immediately submerged. According to a fisherman who had served in the Russian Fleet, she was of the "Shchuka" type. Possibly the submarine was reconnoitering the area prior to an intended enemy landing operation. No incidents in the areas of the other naval port commanders.

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27 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 4, overcast, fog, visibility
2 km., moderate sea, temperature 1° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
slight radio traffic by the Russian Fleet and,
contrary to yesterday, normal radio traffic
again by patrol forces.

The cruiser which was in the Tuapse area on
26 February put in to a port in the northern
part of the east coast in the morning.

At 1825 another cruiser was picked up between
the Crimea and the northern part of the east
coast. In the evening 1 large vessel and
1 flotilla leader were detected off the central
part of the east coast, proceeding west.
One destroyer was intercepted in the Sevastopol
area, while 7 submarines were detected in the
same area and the western Black Sea.
Two more submarines were off the central part
of the east coast.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

- 0825 Five naval ferry barges put out from Constantza
for Varna which they reached as scheduled.
- 0900 Four motor minesweepers (FR) of the Danube
Flotilla put out from Constantza on probing
reconnaissance as far as CS 3 to check the
approach route for the steamer "Sulina" which
was to be transferred from Burgas.
- 1000 They put in again because of the unfavorable
weather and bad visibility.

South Russian Area:

Further investigation of the flashing signals
and gun flashes observed westsouthwest of
Skadovsk on 21 February has so far brought no
results.

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28 February, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 3, overcast, visibility 5 km., slight mist, moderate sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continuing supply traffic to and from Sevastopol. No reconnaissance of the east coast because of the weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser identified yesterday off the northern part of the east coast was in the Tuapse area at 2000 today, probably with the cruiser intercepted in the Sevastopol area on 26 February.

Three destroyers were detected between Sevastopol and south of Sudak Bay and 8 submarines off the south Crimean coast and in the western Black Sea.

Bulgarian Area:

The northern entrance to Burgas Bay was checked for mines without result.

Rumanian Area:

1000 Four motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Constantza on probing reconnaissance as far as CS 3.

1545 They put in again. No mines swept.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimca:

Supplementary report for 27 February:

One burst of fire on Eupatoria from sea at long range at 2330. No damage reported.

Supplementary report for 27 February:

From 2320 to 2340 Yalta was shelled from the sea by light and medium guns. Direct hit on the guards' canteen on the mole; 1 man seriously wounded.

In the daily report, 11th Army H.Q. reported that,

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after softening up by artillery which in places amounted to a barrage of fire, the enemy had started the large-scale attack on the Kerch and Sevastopol fronts.

As far as can be seen from Main Naval D/F Station reports and the unfortunately few air reconnaissance observations, the enemy has apparently temporarily abandoned the plan for simultaneous landings behind the German front lines.

At a conference with General Zander, Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force, I pointed out the immediate need for accurate information on ships in ports on the east coast and convoys and escort vessels proceeding between the east coast and Kerch and Sevastopol.

General:

The Rumanian fighters which took off from Odessa on ice reconnaissance reported that there was a strip of ice from Bugaz to Odessa stretching 1 km. out to sea.

Off Odessa the ice extended 5 - 6 km. out to sea and east of Odessa as far as Ochakov there were icefields as far as 1 km. out to sea. The Dnieper estuary is still frozen.

Unless the weather improves, minesweeping activity and convoy traffic cannot be resumed at present.

Readiness (Rumanian naval forces):

Gunboat "Stihi" non-operational until the rest of her minor repairs have been completed.

(Signed) "Gotting.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 MARCH, 1942

PG/31506

CONFIDENTIAL

1 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

INE winds, force 3, overcast, visibility 4 km., misty, slight sea, temperature -1° C.

Air reconnaissance intercepted a convoy of 7 transports putting in to Sevastopol at 0940 escorted by 1 destroyer and 2 torpedoboats, also a convoy of 3 freighters off Kerch at 1133.

Kerch: 2 medium and 11 small freighters and 1 tanker of 4,000 tons.

There were 6 medium and 2 small freighters off Kamish Burun.

These reports show that the enemy is continuing to bring up heavy reinforcements to both fronts.

No reports on shipping in east coast harbors were received today.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser which was detected in the Tuapse area on 26 February and the other which was intercepted on 27 February between the Crimea and the northern part of the east coast were now probably both off the east coast of the Black Sea.

Six submarines were detected in the Sevastopol area and in the western Black Sea: one was about 70 miles southwest of Sevastopol at 0415. No further observations apart from normal radio traffic of defense forces.

Bulgarian Area:

The check sweep in the northern entrance to Burgas Bay was broken off because of the weather.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports of any incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders.

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2 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

ENE winds, force 4, fog with rain,
visibility 1 km., moderate sea, temperature
1° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force) submitted
the following reports only:

Sevastopol at 0710: 1 medium transport
putting in; 2 destroyers, 1 tanker of 5,000
tons and 2 medium freighters in the harbor.
There was no shipping traffic in the area
about 85 miles south of the line from
Sevastopol to Sudak.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
very slight activity of Russian naval forces
today. The old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna"
was probably off the central to southern parts
of the east coast at 1900 (last reported in
Novorossisk, hence probably put out to escort
supply traffic).

The cruiser reported as probably having put
in to a harbor on the north coast on 27 February
was also off the central to southern parts
of the east coast with 1 destroyer.

At 2000 another destroyer was reported to
be about 110 miles southsoutheast of Cape
Sarich.

Submarines detected: 4 in the Sevastopol
area, 2 off Novorossisk and 2 off Batum.

Normal radio traffic of patrol forces.

Bulgarian Area:

The check sweep in Burgas Bay was broken
off because of the weather.

Rumanian Area:

0900 Trials of destroyer "Marasesti" off Constantza
until 1000.

South Russian Area:

Supplementary report for 1 March:

At 2300 a Russian plane dropped 4 bombs near
the south dockyard at Nikolaiev and near
Nikolaiev-East airfield. No damage.

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Crimea:

No incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders.

Situation:

11th Army H.Q. today reported continuation of the enemy attack with a striking increase in artillery fire. In the area northeast of Theodosia, 2 warships intervened in the land fighting. Army H.Q. regards the situation on the Kerch front as extremely tense. In accordance with orders from Group Command, South, operational plans have been prepared for minelaying off the ports of Ak Mechet, Eupatoria, Yalta and Theodosia and off the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. These assignments await Group Command's approval. I have obtained Marshal Antonescu's agreement to these operations which are to be carried out by minelayers "Murgescu" and "Dacia", escorted by 1 or 2 destroyers.

In view of the critical situation on the Kerch front, the minelaying assignment off Theodosia should have first priority as this is the most likely place for an enemy landing attempt. As Russian naval forces are at present particularly active in the Theodosia area, this minelaying operation would require full-scale employment of the Rumanian naval forces including escorting destroyers however slight the prospects of success might be. These vessels are, however, urgently needed for the imminent supply assignments, the success of which will have a decisive influence on the situation on the southern part of the Eastern Front. In my opinion the minelaying operations must take second place.

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3 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 1, slight mist, visibility 6 km., moderate sea, temperature 1° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continuation of heavy convoy traffic to and from Sevastopol, in the area south of Kerch Strait and off the east coast of the Black Sea.

At 0905 11 transports put out from Sevastopol escorted by 2 destroyers, 3 patrol vessels and several small boats (probably M.T.B.s). Very lively activity of Russian escort forces to protect the above-mentioned supply traffic.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the old battleship and 1 cruiser were still off the central to southern parts of the east coast.

The following were also detected: 1 large vessel, 1 destroyer and 1 unidentified vessel off the northern part of the east coast; 1 destroyer in the Sevastopol area in the afternoon coming from the east; 6 submarines including 5 in the Sevastopol area; 1 submarine tender located about 90 miles southwest of Novorossisk at 2010.

Bulgarian Area:

The entrances to Burgas Bay and Varna Bay were swept for mines. Result will be reported later.

Rumanian Area:

0730 Two motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Constantza on an exploratory sweep to the south as far as Tuzla.

1600 They put in again. No mines swept.

0845 Trials of gunboat "Stihi" until 1030. One main engine broke down.

South Russian Area:

Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 149 observed 2 rockets south of Ochakov. According to a report submitted to the detachment (source unknown), 2 Russian warships were sighted off Ochakov-North.

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Rumanian planes which took off immediately and landed again at 1835 did not intercept any ships at sea.

Crimea:

Supplementary report for 2 March:

Numerous air raids on Theodosia during the night (times not specified). Also a short bombardment from the sea.

No damage reported from Naval Port Commander's area.

On the basis of intercepted radio messages, enemy gas attacks on Theodosia are thought to be possible.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Stihi" non-operational. Duration will be reported later.

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4 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, slight mist, visibility
10 km., calm sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance was impossible because of
the weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
that the cruiser which had probably proceeded
to the east on 1 March was again in the
Sevastopol area, where there were also
3 destroyers and 5 submarines. About 60
miles southeast of Cape Sarich there were
3 submarines and 1 submarine tender.
There was 1 destroyer in the Tuapse area and
another in the Batum area. No reports on
radio traffic of patrol forces.

Bulgarian Area:

Steamer "Sulina" put out from Burgas for
Constantza escorted by 3 Bulgarian E-boats.

No results were reported after the check
sweeps in Varna Bay and Burgas Bay on 3 March
and in the inner Varna Bay and the southern
entrance on 4 March.

A Russian mine of unidentified type was
washed ashore near Sozopol. The Bulgarian
minesweeping formation removed the fuse and
salvaged it. A Russian explosive device
employed against search gear was also salvaged.

Rumanian Area:

Two motor minesweepers (FR) put out from
Constantza to check the area as far as the
anti-submarine minefield near Tuzla.
With gear set for 10 meters, a mine exploded.
(Off the minefield the setting was 12 meters.)

1035

Torpedo firing trials of destroyer "Regele
Ferdinand" until 1230. One torpedo was a
ground-runner at the end of the initial run.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

Naval Shore Commanders, Ukraine and Crimea
submitted no reports.

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5 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 1, overcast, slight mist,
visibility 4 km., slight sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no reports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the submarine tender intercepted yesterday 60 miles south of Cape Sarich was probably still in the same area or east of it. There are also 2 submarines in that area, while 2 destroyers and 3 submarines are in the Sevastopol area and 1 destroyer is in an unidentified position in the eastern Black Sea.

Normal radio traffic of patrol forces.

Bulgarian Area:

- 0815 Three Bulgarian E-boats put in to Varna again after escorting steamer "Sulina".
- 1615 Naval ferry barge No. 121 put in to Varna from Constantza.

Rumanian Area:

- 0400 Destroyers "Maresti" and "Marasesti" put out from Constantza to the south to pick up steamer "Sulina".
- 0940 They put in again with steamer "Sulina".
- 0800 Naval ferry barge No. 121 put out from Constantza for Varna.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

- 0100 An enemy landing attempt near Cape Aitodor (some 30 miles southwest of Yalta) was repulsed by artillery and mortar fire. Enemy strength: 2 gunboats, probably 1 submarine and several transports.

Naval Shore Commander was asked whether these vessels might have been confused with a normal enemy convoy as they always proceeded very close to the coast.

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1135 A surfaced submarine was observed about 5 - 10 km. east of Theodosia. The number of enemy submarines reported close to the coast in the last few days may indicate that the enemy is attempting to reconnoiter the strength of the German defenses on the southeast coast of the Crimea prior to intended landing operations.

No reports from the areas of the other naval port commanders.

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6 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SW winds, force 2, overcast, slight mist, visibility 6 km., calm sea, temperature 2° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force) was comprehensive for the first time in several days, particularly over the east coast of the Black Sea. The following reports were submitted:

Sevastopol at 0750: 3 medium freighters putting out; at 0940 3 patrol vessels stopped at the harbor entrance and 1 submarine putting out, course west; at 0950 3 medium freighters putting in.

Sevastopol at 1000: 1 freighter of about 2,000 tons, 1 torpedoboat, 8 small freighters totaling 2,300 tons, and 28 coastal vessels.

Kerch at 0921: 1 tanker of 6,000 - 7,000 tons, 5 small freighters, each 400 - 600 tons, and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons.

Kamish Burun at 0921: 1 freighter of 5,000 tons and 1 warship.

At 0232 there was 1 merchant ship with 2 escort vessels, course north, about 8 miles southwest of Anapa and 1 destroyer, course 240°, high speed, about 15 miles west of Anapa.

Novorossisk at 1607: 1 battleship, 2 large destroyers, 17 freighters totaling 46,000 tons, 2 tankers, each 6,000 tons, 35 medium and small freighters totaling 10,000 tons, 2 large destroyers and 2 destroyers.

Ochemchiri at 0555: 2 patrol vessels, course south, close to the coast.

At 0532 there were 2 motor minesweepers, course north, between Batum and Poti.

Poti at 0540: 1 submarine putting in.

There are many vessels in Novorossisk again. This concentration of a large part of Russia's merchant fleet may indicate imminent large-scale operations such as landing attempts.

Main Naval D/E Station, Constantza reported 2 destroyers and 4 submarines in the Sevastopol area; 1 large vessel (probably a cruiser)

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between the Crimea and the northern part of the east coast; 3 destroyers and 1 large vessel (probably a cruiser) between the southern tip of the Crimea and Novorossisk; 1 flotilla leader and 1 destroyer in the Theodosia area. The submarine tender already reported on 4 and 5 March is still in an unidentified position in the central to eastern Black Sea with 2 submarines. Normal radio traffic of guardboats and patrol boats.

Supplementary information for 5 March:

During the evening of 5 March, the cruiser detected off the central to southern parts of the east coast on 3 March was picked up in the Sevastopol area.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports of any special incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that, according to statements by previous Russian harbor masters, the harbor entrances to Ak Mechet and Dzharulgach are blocked by mines. This is being investigated. Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that single submarines proceeding off Kuru Usen and Theodosia had several times shelled the coast, but had been forced to withdraw by our guns. This fresh reconnaissance of the coast by enemy submarines may mean imminent enemy harassing actions at these places (see War Diary 5 March).

Readiness (Bulgarian naval forces):

E-boat No. 3 and torpedoboat "Hrabi" operational.

Torpedoboat "Strogi" non-operational until 18 March.

General:

1st Admiral's Staff Officer flew to Nikolaiev to 4th Air Force to discuss the minelaying operations about to be executed off the Crimean ports and the southern entrance to Kerch Strait.

The following results were reached in the discussion of the comprehensive air reconnaissance and bomber protection which I regard as a

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prerequisite for the operations:

1. The execution of this assignment requested by Admiral, Black Sea would mean that 4th Air Force would have no planes for operations in the Crimea and over most of the front of Army Group South. (Each operation will last at least 3 days.)
2. 4th Air Force is of the opinion that in these circumstances 11th Army H.Q. will not ask for the minelaying operations to be carried out or that Army Group South will veto any such request from H.Q.
3. 4th Air Force points out that even the most exhaustive reconnaissance can guarantee no accurate results in the present weather. As some of the bombers have long approach routes, it will often be doubtful whether the bombers will arrive in time when required by naval forces. Support by our fighters (e.g. against enemy air shadows) cannot be given because of their slight radius of action.

After 1st Admiral's Staff Officer returned, I reported the results of the discussion with 4th Air Force to Naval Group Command, South.

Situation and Plans:

The continuation of supply difficulties at 11th Army H.Q. and Army Group South makes it necessary to resume naval supply traffic whenever the ice melts.

The following assignments must be carried out:

1. Checking of our own minefields in the Bulgarian and Rumanian areas. We must accept that these minefields have probably suffered considerably during the bad ice period and will therefore have to be strengthened.
2. Laying of the anti-submarine minefields (planned in 1941, but not laid owing to lack of time) off St. George Arm (3 minefields) and north of Gibrieni Bay (1 minefield). For the 3 minefields off St. George Arm, it is necessary first to check the Russian minefield said to be there. If it is found, it will not be necessary to lay further minefields.
3. Checking of the entire supply route between Burgas and Ochakov-North.

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For the execution of assignments 2 and 3, the 4 motor minesweepers (TR) of Danube Flotilla now in Constantza will have to be transferred with 1 tender via Sulina to Burgas as soon as the ice situation allows. It must be remembered that it will be dangerous for these boats to be in either harbor once the ice starts moving in the Danube or the Dniester. Danube Flotilla will then have to move at once to Constantza.

Danube Flotilla has received the necessary directives and will now check the minefield protecting Constantza.

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7 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 6, fair, misty, visibility
10 km., moderate sea, temperature -6° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force) submitted
no reports on shipping in ports in the
Sevastopol-Batum area.

Lively activity of Russian surface forces
(2 probable cruisers and several destroyers)
was detected in the Sevastopol area.

The reason for and intentions of this striking
traffic are not known. According to one
report, no shipping traffic was observed
between Novorossisk and Sevastopol in the
forenoon.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
that the cruiser detected in the Sevastopol
area on 5 March (see War Diary 6 March) was
in the Sevastopol area with 3 submarines
during the evening and night.

The large vessel detected yesterday between
the Crimea and the northern part of the east
coast is also probably in the Crimean area now.
Probably the vessel is a cruiser with C-in-C
on board. She last appeared on 21 February
at the time of the expected landing operation
and before that on 26 January when Theodosia
was shelled. This cruiser (?) communicated
with Sevastopol several times by radio.

There were 4 destroyers and 1 flotilla leader
in the Novorossisk area.

The submarine tender which has been reported
several times in the last few days is at sea
with 2 submarines.

Normal radio traffic of guardboats and patrol
forces.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

1300 Marshal Antonescu was informed by C-in-C of the
expected arrival of the Italian midget submarines
and other special vessels. Antonescu was very
pleased to learn of these reinforcements and

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requested that his appreciation should be forwarded. He again pointed out how important the right flank was for the whole Eastern Front, although at present it was completely unprotected, and he also stressed the urgency of striking a blow at enemy naval forces and, if possible, of eliminating the enemy's present naval superiority.

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8 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

ESE winds, force 3, overcast, visibility 10 km., slight sea, temperature -1° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force) submitted numerous reports on the usual enemy supply traffic and patrol service off the northern part of the east coast and to and from Sevastopol. No striking observations were made.

Various sighting reports concerning shipping in Sevastopol and the main ports on the northern part of the east coast also failed to mention any important vessels.

Sevastopol at 0853 (aerial photograph):
2 destroyers, 2 medium freighters, 1 repair ship, 1 destroyer and 1 submarine in dock and 1 submarine at the jetty in the south bay: 1 probable flotilla leader, 1 probable destroyer and 2 small naval vessels in the north bay.

Air Commander, South reported that a submarine had been successfully attacked some 75 miles south of Yalta at 1220. Probably this was one of the submarines detected by Main Naval D/F Station in radio communication with the submarine tender during the last few days.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser and 2 submarines in the Sevastopol area, 3 destroyers off the central part of the east coast (probably put in to Batum in the morning), also 1 flotilla leader and 1 submarine, 1 submarine tender and 1 submarine south of the Crimea.

Normal traffic of defense and patrol forces.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports from the areas of the naval port commanders.

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9 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 6, overcast, snow,
visibility 800 meters, rough sea, temperature
0° C.

Air reconnaissance (4th Air Force and Air
Commander, South (Sadki-Crimea)) again
submitted numerous reports:

At 1020 no shipping traffic was observed from
the area south of the Crimea and Kerch Strait
as far as 44° 10' N. At 1440 3 freighters
escorted by 1 light cruiser and 1 destroyer,
course 140°, speed 8 knots, were intercepted
about 90 miles south of Sevastopol. This
was obviously a very important convoy which
was making for the Turkish coast, later to
proceed further east.

Sevastopol at 0845: 3 destroyers and 3 freighters
putting out; 1 small freighter and 2 escort
vessels putting out at 0850; 3 freighters and
1 destroyer putting out at 0945; 1 freighter
at 1350 and 1 torpedoboat and 2 escort vessels,
all outward bound; 6 freighters in the harbor
at 1435; 1 torpedoboat putting in at 1525.

Kamish Burun at 0853: 1 freighter of 5,000
tons and 1 tanker of 3,000 tons.

Kerch at 0855: 1 freighter of 7,000 tons,
1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 2 tankers totaling
3,000 tons, and 40 small vessels.

Novorossisk at 1415: 1 battleship, 1 destroyer
and 7 freighters of up to 5,000 tons.

Tuapse at 1400: 1 heavy cruiser, 1 light
cruiser, 2 destroyers, 5 submarines, 1 freighter
of 5,000 tons and 3 freighters, each 3,000 tons.

These reports showed that the heavy convoy
traffic was continuing, particularly in the
Sevastopol area.

Air Commander reported that according to
statements made by the air crew the submarine
which was attacked yesterday was almost certainly
sunk.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
that the cruiser and 5 submarines reported
yesterday were in the Sevastopol area today with
2 destroyers. The following were also detected:

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1 large vessel (C-in-C on board?), apparently proceeding west, southeast of the Crimea;
1 submarine tender and 1 submarine off the central to southern parts of the east coast;
2 submarines at sea in unidentified positions,
Normal activity of defense and patrol forces.

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping off Varna or Burgas because of the weather.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported from Ak Mechet that several mines had been driven ashore by the storm.

Supplementary report for 8 March:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that an enemy submarine had fired a torpedo at Yalta harbor. It ran aground on the shore. Salvage work is in progress. It may have been fired at the wrong target or with the intention of making a gap in the barrage.

Readiness:

Auxiliary minelayer "Dacia" at limited readiness: echo-sounding gear out of order.

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10 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 1, 2/10 cloud, visibility 4 miles, slight sea, force 2, temperature -2° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted a few reports only:

Between 0715 and 1000, no shipping traffic was detected in the area south of the line from Sevastopol/Kerch as far as the 44th parallel and southsouthwest of Sevastopol as far as the 43rd parallel.

Tuapse at 1417: 1 destroyer off the harbor.

Air Commander, South reported that the large vessel (with C-in-C on board?) reported on 7 and 9 March was the cruiser "Komintern", which was escorting the convoy reported by air reconnaissance yesterday as about 90 miles south of Sevastopol. The convoy was unsuccessfully attacked by a torpedo plane.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the vessels reported yesterday by air reconnaissance with a convoy south of Sevastopol today made off to the east but were later detected again in the Sevastopol area.

The cruiser reported yesterday in the Sevastopol area was detected about 50 miles north of Cape Bafra Burnu (about the middle of the Turkish Black Sea coast) at 1546.

The old battleship which was last photographed in Novorossisk is at sea in an unidentified position and was in radio communication with Sevastopol at 0210.

The following were also detected: 2 destroyers and 3 submarines in the Sevastopol area, 1 submarine about 100 miles westsouthwest of Balaklava at 0612 and 1 submarine about 120 miles southwest of Sevastopol at 1215.

The submarine tender which has frequently been reported is now between the southern tip of the Crimea and the northern part of the east coast.

Normal radio traffic of guardboats and patrol forces.

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Bulgarian Area:

1030 Naval ferry barges "Tarabaya" and "Cavalla" put out from Varna for the Bosphorus escorted by 2 Bulgarian E-boats. The E-boats went with the convoy as far as the Bulgarian/Turkish frontier and then put in to Zarebo.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No special incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders.

Plans:

As a result of the unfavorable weather (mainly good visibility with considerable wind and sea), it was impossible to transfer the 2 tankers "Albaro" and "Prodromos" to Constantza. They have been lying in Istanbul since 4 March.

As Group Command again stressed the urgency of this transfer, I decided to carry it out, since although there is no likelihood of visibility deteriorating, wind and sea are expected to decrease.

Destroyers "Rogele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" are available as escorts, but there can be no air reconnaissance as all the planes of 4th Air Force are on combat operations.

Rumanian Naval Command was requested via Special Duties Detachment, Constantza to escort the vessels on 11/12 March. The two destroyers should pick up the tankers outside the territorial waters off the Bosphorus shortly before nightfall and escort them directly to Constantza, course approximately 029°.

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11 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, fair, visibility 7 miles, calm sea, force 1, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance detected very heavy convoy traffic proceeding to and from Sevastopol.

No reports were received of any other important traffic in the Black Sea.

No reports on shipping in ports on the east coast.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser detected yesterday about 50 miles north of Cape Bafra Burnu was again in the Sevastopol area with 2 destroyers. The following were also detected: 1 large vessel and 1 destroyer between the Crimea and the northern part of the east coast; 1 destroyer and 1 submarine off the central to southern parts of the east coast.

At 0115 the submarine tender was detected about 60 miles south of the Crimea in radio communication with 1 submarine which was about 35 miles south of Alushta at 2225 on 10 March.

Normal radio traffic of guardboats and patrol forces.

No enemy intentions can be deduced from today's air reconnaissance and Main Naval d/F Station reports.

Bulgarian Area:

Two Bulgarian E-boats put in to Varna after escorting naval ferry barges "Tarabaya" and "Cavalla" to the Bulgarian/Turkish frontier. The barges were bound for the Bosphorus. The E-boats reported that they had used depth charges to explode a drifting Russian mine near Nos Emine. It was an inertia contact mine which could not be shot up in the rough sea. According to a report from Special Command, Bulgaria, the 2 naval ferry barges put in to the Bosphorus without incident.

No mines were swept during a check sweep of the southern entrance to Varna Bay.

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Rumanian Area:

0830 Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" put out from Constantza to the south as scheduled to pick up tankers "Prodromos" and "Albaro" off the Bosphorus. The tankers are on transfer to Constantza (see War Diary 10 March). On 12 March, 4th Air Force will be able to send 1 Do 24 (which will be available from today) from Constantza to escort this convoy. The plane will reconnoiter the area east of the convoy's approach route and from there in a north-westerly direction to Sevastopol. Attempts will be made to provide a second plane during the afternoon.

During the day no reports were received in Bucharest from air reconnaissance or Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza to indicate that the enemy knew of the transfer of the 2 tankers or was taking appropriate countermeasures.

2140 Special Duties Detachment, Constantza reported that according to a radiogram from the leading destroyer (T.O.O. 2018) the 2 tankers had not reached the agreed rendezvous at 1800. Special Duties Detachment also reported that, as the tankers' sailing might have been delayed, they had immediately requested information from Group Command, South. According to the operational order, if the tankers were not met before nightfall, the destroyers were to pick them up on the following morning.

Nothing can therefore be done at present. Group Command, South must ask Naval Attache, Istanbul if and when the tankers sailed. Only then when I have further news can I make a new decision on the execution or abandoning of the escort assignment.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No reports of any incidents.

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12 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, fog, visibility 1 km., sea 1,
temperature -3° C.

Air reconnaissance detected a convoy probably coming from Kerch which was proceeding off the northern part of the east coast on course 140°. It consisted of 1 - 2 destroyers, 4 torpedoboats (or tugs?), 3 - 4 M.T.B.s, 1 towed floating dock and 1 heavily armed freighter.

None of our air reconnaissance reports had previously mentioned the presence of a floating dock in Kerch or Kamish Burun.

The purpose and intentions of this convoy cannot be deduced. According to the latest report, it was about 14 miles south of Anapa at 1445.

Air Commander, South reported that he had attacked the convoy, but was unsuccessful in the face of the strong anti-aircraft fire and fighter protection.

There were only a few other air reconnaissance reports of no great importance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the cruiser and destroyer reported yesterday in the Sevastopol area had probably proceeded southeast. In the Sevastopol area today there were 3 destroyers, the submarine tender some 50 miles south of Sudak at 0525 and 2 submarines (one some 55 miles south of Cape Sarich at 0420).

Two destroyers and 1 submarine were detected in the Batum area, also 2 submarines in unidentified positions.

Normal traffic of guardboats and patrol forces.

Bulgarian Area:

Check sweeps off the northern entrances to Varna Bay and Burgas Bay. Report following.

Rumanian Area:

0015. Group Command, South informed me in reply to my telephone inquiry that for some unknown reason the 2 tankers had not sailed and that

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the escort assignment was therefore to be abandoned. I also learned that during the night several telephone conversations had been held direct with Special Duties Detachment, Constantza. I informed Group Command that the order to break off the operation would be passed on immediately to Special Duties Detachment.

Special Duties Detachment reported that destroyer "Regele Ferdinand" had engine trouble and would not be able to put out again when required.

As I had to provide escort for the tankers as quickly as possible, I decided in spite of the obvious drawbacks to send "Marasesti" alone if necessary. I instructed Special Duties Detachment accordingly.

1225 Group Command, South informed me that according to a report from Naval Attache, Istanbul the 2 tankers had left the Bosphorus at 0700.

1320 Special Duties Detachment, Constantza reported that the 2 destroyers would be ready to sail at 1500.

I informed them that a final sailing order for the 2 destroyers would follow.

The Do 24 took off on reconnaissance as scheduled and landed again at 1140. No special observations made at sea. Attempts will be made to send the plane out again in the afternoon.

The situation is as follows:

Provided that the 2 tankers have been proceeding at 6 knots on the prescribed direct course to Constantza since 0700 in accordance with their orders and that the destroyers proceed south at 1500 at an average speed of 22 knots, the tankers should be picked up near Burgas before nightfall. If not, the destroyers should patrol the tankers' approach route during the night and attempt to pick them up at dawn between Cape Kaliakra and Cape Sabla.

Hence, Special Duties Detachment was ordered in a Most Immediate teletype (with copy to Group Command) to have the destroyers put out again as soon as possible and, as outlined above, to pick up the tankers before dark if possible, otherwise at dawn on the next morning.

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1600 Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" put out again for the south.

1842 Group Command, South informed me by telephone that the tankers had put in to the Bosphorus again at 1400. Next sailing was to be reported later. I informed Group Command that I would at once order Special Duties Detachment to recall the destroyers.

The Do 24 which had taken off again at 1505 landed at Constantza at 1815. No special observations.

2400 Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" put in to Constantza.

An exploratory sweep was carried out by 2 motor minesweepers (FR) from Constantza to CS 2. No mines swept.

South Russian Area:

About 1800, according to a report from Naval Port Commander, Odessa, a landing was attempted from a few rowing boats near Chebanka. Rumanian reports stated that a few men reached the shore, but were forced by machine-gunfire and rifle fire to take to their boats again. The boats then disappeared out to sea.

Probably this was a small partisan operation. Naval Port Commander, Odessa ordered increased readiness.

2245 Northeast of Odessa a red flare was observed while a white flare could be seen at Chebanka (11 mines northeast of Odessa). These signals were probably connected with the above landing attempt.

No further reports of incidents were received.

Crimea:

No incidents in the areas of the naval port commanders.

11th Army H.Q. stated in the daily report that an enemy submarine had been observed at 1330 near Cape Aitodor (southwest of Yalta).

Readiness:

Gunboat "Stihi" again operational.

Auxiliary minelayer "Dacia" at limited readiness: echo-sounding gear and paravane still out of order.

CONFIDENTIAL

13 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 1, almost entirely overcast, visibility 5 km., smooth sea, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance (Air Commander, South) reported 1 freighter of about 2,000 tons at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait at 1415.

Kerch: 1 tanker of about 5,000 tons and 1 freighter of about 2,000 tons.

Kamish Burun: 1 freighter of about 6,000 tons, 1 freighter of about 5,000 tons and 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons.

Air Commander, South also reported a successful attack on a submarine about 130 miles south of Theodosia at 1415.

No further air reconnaissance reports on traffic in the Black Sea or shipping in port.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that no radio traffic had been heard from 2300 on 12 March until 0700. Other reports give no indication that the enemy is planning any special operations.

The following were detected in radio traffic during the day: 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers and 2 submarines in the Sevastopol area to south of the Crimea: 1 large vessel and 1 submarine off the northeast coast of the Black Sea, probably both course west: 1 cruiser which was off the southeast coast yesterday still there, also 1 submarine; several other submarines at sea in unidentified positions. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza also reported that the control station for naval planes had ordered radio silence for all planes.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

Escort for "Albaro" and "Prodromos" (see War Diary 11 and 12 March): According to Group Command, South, the sailing order sent for the tankers from Sofia via German Embassy, Sofia and Naval Attache, Istanbul was 12 hours late in arriving. The tankers put out on receipt of the order.

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1100

In a telephone conversation with my Chief of Staff and 1st Admiral's Staff Officer, Naval Group Command, South, I later learned that the following information had been received from Istanbul by Naval Group Command, South during the "Albaro" operation:

1. About 2145 on 11 March: "Steamers late in putting out. They have only enough fuel for 2 days in port apart from that required for passage to Constantza."
2. At 2350 on 11 March: "Steamers could not pass the Bosphorus barrages by day. They will be at the rendezvous at 0800 on 12 March."

Both reports were passed on to Naval Special Duties Detachment by telephone by Naval Group Command, South during the night of 11/12 March. They discussed the possibility of having the steamers met by the destroyers at 0800 on 12 March, but Special Duties Detachment was against it because destroyer "Marasesti" could not take part owing to lack of fuel and one destroyer was insufficient to guarantee meeting. Naval Special Duties Detachment was then directed by the deputy Chief of Operations Staff, Naval Group Command, South to send a radiogram to the steamers ordering them to return to Istanbul. Of this also, both Naval Group Command, South and Special Duties Detachment failed to notify me (see War Diary 12 March, 1110). Their report merely stated that the tankers could not be contacted by radio. The fact that the order to put in had been broadcast 8 times between 0200 and 0900 was not reported.

This failure to report all details (see War Diary 11 and 12 March) made it very difficult for me to survey the situation. My decisions - to break off at 0115 on 12 March and to put out again at 1320 - were largely based on false suppositions. It is of secondary importance that, with full knowledge of the facts, I might have reached different conclusions. I was left without news partly because of the deputy Chief of Staff's misunderstanding of his duties and responsibilities as German Chief of Staff of the Rumanian naval forces and partly because he thought that I would have received the complete reports from Naval Group Command, South.

I have reprimanded Naval Special Duties Detachment for their mistakes and laid down express rules of procedure in similar cases for the benefit

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of the German Chief of Staff of Rumanian
naval forces.

I have also requested Naval Group Command,
South to pass on all information received only
by Naval Liaison Officer, Sofia which is
important for such operations. Group Command
has agreed.

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14 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNW winds, force 1, fair, visibility 20 km.,
slight sea, force 2, temperature -9^o C.

Air reconnaissance submitted the following
reports only:

Kerch at 0704: 1 medium freighter in the
roads.

Kamish Burun at 0708: 6 small freighters
in the harbor and 2 small freighters in
the roads.

At 0803 no shipping traffic was observed
west of Novorossisk in Kerch Strait or north
or south of Kerch Peninsula.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
1 cruiser, 3 destroyers and 2 submarines
still in the Sevastopol area to the southwest
coast of the Crimea; 1 submarine off the
northeast coast of the Black Sea; 1 cruiser
(as yesterday) off the southern part of the
east coast in radio communication with Batum.
Eight more submarines were detected at sea,
including at least 3 in the southwestern
Black Sea, 3 off the southern part of the
east coast and 2 in unidentified position.
They maintained radio silence and were only
intercepted tuned for reception.

Bulgarian Area:

2100

Steamers "Succava" and "Danubius" put out
from Varna for Constantza escorted by 1 Bulgarian
torpedoboat and 3 E-boats. The northern
entrance to Varna Bay was checked as far as
Kaliakra. No mines swept.

Rumanian Area:

Trials of gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat
"Smeul" off Constantza.

Check sweep by gunboat "Stihi" as far as
buoys A and B.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No reports from the area of the naval shore
commanders.

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General:

In radiogram 1842/42 of 12 March, Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. asked Group Command, South for assistance in repelling enemy landings in Karkinitzki Bay. 11th Army H.Q. expects such landings because of the proximity of the important supply routes on Perekop isthmus.

I sent my opinion to Group Command, South by teletype:

1. Landing attempts are very unlikely in Karkinitzki Bay east of Chorly because of the depth of water there and earlier enemy minelaying (especially off Perekop).
2. The main danger points would be:
 - a. The north coast near Klarovka (about 45 km. west of Skadovsk).
 - b. The ports of Skadovsk and Chorly.

The depth of water, the configuration of the shore and the coastal terrain make it easy to land at Klarovka. After landing, an enemy battalion (with a few vehicles and heavy and light machine-guns) could take Skadovsk and Chorly by surprise without any difficulty. Both ports are difficult to defend against an enemy proceeding by land and the enemy could persist in landing operations with the aim of cutting the supply routes to the Crimea.

3. There are the following possibilities of defense:
 - a. FMB minefields in the harbor approaches at Skadovsk and Chorly.
 - b. FMB and UMB minefields in the fairway between Dzhariulgach island and Bakalkaya bank (first to the 5-meter line and later to Bakal headland).
 - c. Setting-up of one battery of Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 145, which is in Skadovsk, on Dzhariulgach island.
 - d. Mining of the coast near Klarovka with FMB mines or possibly UMB mines.
 - e. Laying of many mines on the shore and preparation of attacking forces by the Army at the above danger points.

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4. Possibilities of defense depend on the ice situation and the readiness of the naval ferry barges which are now being prepared as quickly as possible. Investigations are now in progress to see whether minelaying gear can be installed aboard the barges.

They will be required for

- a. carrying UMB mines from Constantza to the minelaying area,
 - b. transferring the battery to Dzhariulgach island, and
 - c. laying the minefields.
5. The FMB mines are now en route from Germany to the south Russian area and the Crimea. We are trying to find out from Transportation Command where they are at present.
 6. Air Commander, South was asked to reconnoiter the ice situation in Karkinitzki Bay as soon as possible. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine was given the same directive for the Army Coastal Artillery Detachment in his area.

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15 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 2, overcast, visibility 4 miles, sea 1, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continuation of supply traffic to and from Sevastopol and in the Kerch Strait area. Seven small merchant ships were also observed at anchor off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula. Probably troops, equipment etc. were being landed to reinforce the enemy front in the Kerch area. The vessels presumably anchored there to relieve the congestion in Kerch harbor where 4 freighters, each about 3,000 tons, and 2 small freighters, each about 500 tons, were reported.

No reports on shipping in ports on the east coast.

According to a report from Air Commander, South a freighter escorted by a destroyer was unsuccessfully attacked about 75 miles south of Yalta at 1557. The ice reconnaissance of Karkinitzki Bay which I requested yesterday brought the following results:

North coast free of ice approximately as far as the western tip of Dzhariulgach island. Pack ice in Dzhariulgach Bay and the eastern part of Karkinitzki Bay (including the ports of Skadovsk and Chorly). Bakalskaya Bay and the southern part of Karkinitzki Bay free of ice.

These findings mean that the enemy could attempt to land on the coast, but could not continue the operations by using the ports of Skadovsk and Chorly.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 3 submarines in the Sevastopol area to off the south coast of the Crimea; 1 or 2 destroyers and 1 submarine near Kerch Peninsula and off the northern part of the east coast; the destroyer, reported yesterday between Sevastopol and the southwest coast of the Crimea, off the northern to central parts of the east coast; 2 more submarines in unidentified positions.

Lively patrol activity in the Novorossisk area.

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Owing to incomplete air reconnaissance reports, we cannot discover whether the enemy is planning a special operation.

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping activity off Varna owing to the breakdown of all 4 boats of the Special Duties Detachment (see "Readiness" report).

Rumanian Area:

- 0430 Gunboat "Stihi" and destroyers "Maresti" and "Marasesti" put out from Constantza to the south to pick up steamers "Danubius" and "Succeava" which were coming from Varna (see War Diary 14 March).
- 0715 Rumanian naval forces took over the escort from the Bulgarian escort vessels.
- 1230 Steamers "Danubius" and "Succeava" put in to Constantza.

The above-mentioned Rumanian escort forces put in to Constantza between 1230 and 1250.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No incidents.

Readiness:

Yesterday's trials of gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" showed that the vessels are still non-operational. Duration of the remaining repairs will be reported later.

The 4 boats of Special Duties Detachment, Varna are non-operational. Their engines broke down as the result of leakage. Duration of repairs will be reported later.

(Signed) Götting.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 31 MARCH, 1942

PG/31507

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16 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NW winds, force 4, overcast, visibility
5 miles, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted numerous
reports indicating particularly heavy supply
traffic to and from Kerch.

The main ports on the east coast were also
heavily occupied again.

Novorossisk at 0838: 1 battleship, 1 submarine
and 11 freighters or tankers totaling about
42,000 tons.

Tuapse at 1130: 1 heavy cruiser, 3 destroyers,
10 submarines, 16 freighters totaling about
34,000 tons, and 3 tankers totaling about
21,000 tons.

No reports of any interest were received on
shipping traffic in the Sevastopol area of the
Black Sea.

At 1400 1 submarine was observed off Balaklava
Bay on a westerly course.

No reports were received on shipping traffic
in the central Black Sea.

Main Naval D/T Station, Constantza reported
1 minelayer and some small vessels between
Sevastopol and the southwest coast of the
Crimea; 1 submarine in the southwestern
Black Sea which had been inexactly located
140 miles east of Varna about 2000 on 15 March;
a formation of destroyers and 1 submarine tender
between Kerch Peninsula and the northern part
of the east coast; 1 destroyer and the cruiser
reported there yesterday in the Tuapse area;
1 submarine off the central to southern parts
of the east coast; 4 destroyers at sea in
unidentified positions. Radio traffic for
C-in-C Fleet was today passed on to Novorossisk.
Minesweepers and patrol vessels were again
lively near this base.

Taken in conjunction with the air reconnaissance
reports and the landing attempt near Klarovka
(see "South Russian Area"), Main Naval D/T
Station reports would appear to indicate enemy
plans for a large-scale operation.

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Bulgarian/Rumanian Area:

No incidents.

South Russian Area:

0400

Russian landing attempt near Klarovka (north coast of Karkinitzki Bay east of Tendra Peninsula). Several large ships put out small boats. Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 145 and Rumanian Army troops repulsed the landings.

This landing operation may have been an attempt to establish the first bridgehead for a projected large-scale operation to cut the supply routes to the Crimea (see today's air reconnaissance and Main Naval D/F Station reports and War Diary 14 March).

Crimea:

No reports from the areas of the naval port commanders.

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17 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 1, overcast, visibility 5 miles, calm sea, force 1, temperature 0° C.

Air reconnaissance (Air Commander, South) submitted further reports on unchanged supply traffic in the Sevastopol and Kerch areas.

No reports were submitted on shipping traffic off the east coast or in the open sea.

According to aerial photographs, the occupation of Tuapse harbor reported yesterday should read:

1 heavy cruiser ("Voroshilov"), 2 heavy cruisers (in building), 3 destroyers, 10 submarines, 3 minesweepers, 1 passenger ship of about 5,000 tons, 2 passenger ships totaling 6,500 tons, 6 freighters totaling about 11,000 tons, and 3 tankers totaling about 21,000 tons.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 destroyers and 2 submarines between Sevastopol and the southwest coast of the Crimea; 1 submarine tender between Kerch Peninsula and the northern part of the east coast; the destroyer reported on the last 2 days still in the Tuapse area; 1 cruiser and 1 destroyer off the central to southern parts of the east coast; 10 - 12 submarines at sea in unidentified positions, one of which was probably proceeding from the southeast coast to the west.

Normal radio traffic of patrol forces along the entire east coast.

Bulgarian/Rumanian/South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

- 1630 Supplementary report for 16 March:
1 submerged submarine sighted about 500 meters from Yalta mole (probably on reconnaissance for a possible landing operation).
- 0028 Theodosia was shelled from the sea. No damage reported. The type of vessels involved could not be identified.

According to a report from Air Commander, South, there were 3 vessels proceeding course

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southwest, high speed, about 10 - 12 miles from the coast.

Readiness:

Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" and 2 gunboats non-operational until 19 March for de-aeration.

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18 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 3, overcast, visibility 15 miles, sea 1, temperature 3° C.

Air reconnaissance reported continued convoy traffic to and from Sevastopol. Some of these vessels had strong escorts. One convoy, which was also intercepted by Main Naval D/F Station, approached the Crimea apparently from the Turkish coast. It consisted of 2 tankers with 1 heavy cruiser and 1 destroyer.

No reports from the Kerch Strait area.

There were considerably fewer ships in Novorossisk than on 16 March (merchant tonnage only about 23,000 tons).

Tuapse harbor on the other hand was still full.

At 0855 Air Commander, South reported 2 submarines, course west, about 5 miles south of Cape Sarich. Another submarine was unsuccessfully attacked 10 miles west of Sevastopol at 0850.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported the cruiser and destroyer detected yesterday off the central to southern parts of the east coast about 70 miles south of Sevastopol at 1500 (see air reconnaissance report), probably making for the southern tip of the Crimea; 1 flotilla leader and 2 submarines in the Sevastopol area; another submarine off the southern tip of the Crimea and another between the northern part of the east coast and the southern entrance to Kerch Strait; 1 cruiser and 1 destroyer (reported yesterday in the Tuapse area) west of the central part of the east coast; 4 destroyers off the central to southern parts of the east coast; 1 cruiser and several submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

1010 Two motor minesweepers (FR) checked section I of the minefield off Constantza using oropesa gear. Two explosive floats were detonated. The minesweepers completed operations at 1400.

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The use of oropesa gear was ill-advised and in future motor pinnace gear will be employed.

South Russia Area and Crimea:

No reports of any special incidents from the areas of the naval shore commanders.

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19 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 3, visibility 10 miles, sea 1, temperature 6° C.

Air reconnaissance intercepted lively supply traffic in the Kerch Strait area. Both Kerch and Kamish Burun were fully occupied (reinforcements for the Army front).

The number of vessels in Novorossisk had again decreased. No reports from Tuapse.

Poti: 2 light cruisers, 1 flotilla leader, 5 destroyers, 3 submarines, 1 passenger vessel and 1 medium dock. These ships may be non-operational, using Poti as an alternative harbor.

When Main Naval D/F Station reported locating a destroyer about 135 miles southwest of Tuapse at 0645, Air Commander, South dispatched planes on armed diverging search patrol. At 1420 about 40 miles south of Alushta, a convoy was detected, course 310°, medium speed. It consisted of 1 freighter with 1 destroyer and 4 escort vessels. No reports of any attacks etc. were received.

No special reports from the Sevastopol area.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that the destroyer detected yesterday in the Sevastopol area had put in during the night.

The cruiser identified yesterday off the central part of the east coast was in the area west-southwest of Sevastopol in the morning with 3 destroyers and 1 submarine.

Between the Crimea and the northern part of the east coast, there were 2 submarines, while 3 destroyers were detected off the southern part of the east coast. C-in-C Fleet is still in Novorossisk. Two cruisers are at sea in unidentified positions.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0630 Two motor minesweepers (FR) checked the area off Constantza.

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Trials of torpedoboat "Smeul".

Gunboats "Dumitrescu" and "Stihi" put out to check the route to Sulina. They put in to Sulina at 1800.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No reports of any special incidents.

Readiness:

Destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Marasesti" operational.

Torpedoboat "Smeul" operational.

4 boats of Special Duties Detachment, Varna operational.

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20 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 6, squally, overcast, visibility 10 miles, temperature -1° C.

Air reconnaissance submitted no important reports.

Danger of freezing off the north coast of the Black Sea due to a drop in the temperature.

At 1050 the long-range reconnaissance plane reported no enemy forces observed in the area south of Kerch Peninsula as far as Novorossisk.

Enemy shipping in port on 19 March (aerial photographs):

Novorossisk: 1 battleship, 1 large destroyer, 1 destroyer, 4 probable torpedoboats, 1 tanker of 6,000 tons, 1 freighter of 3,500 tons, 1 passenger vessel of 3,000 tons, 6 freighters of 2,000 - 3,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons and 5 freighters, each about 500 tons.

Sevastopol: 1 light cruiser, 1 tanker of 7,000 tons, 2 freighters, each 2,000 tons, 3 freighters of about 1,500 tons, and 1 torpedoboat.

Kerch: 1 tanker of 1,400 tons, 1 freighter of 500 tons, 1 freighter of 400 tons, 6 freighters totaling 2,000 tons, 1 tanker and 1 hull of a warship.

Kamish Burun: 1 freighter of 5,000 tons, 1 freighter of 3,500 tons, 1 freighter of 2,500 tons, 1 freighter of 2,000 tons, 1 freighter of 400 tons, 7 freighters totaling 1,500 tons, and 4 probable gunboats or M.T.B.s.

Tamanskaya: 12 small freighters totaling 2,000 - 3,000 tons.

Achtanisovskaya channel (near Temriuk): 12 small ships, some of them joined in pairs as bridging pontoons.

In the eastern part of Taman channel there is a freighter of about 300 tons stuck in the ice.

Report on the air raid on Sevastopol on 20 March: Direct hits on a passenger vessel of 9,000 - 10,000 tons and 1 tanker of 7,000 tons (see above). Both ships are on fire.

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Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported that a cruiser put out from Sevastopol during the evening of 19 March (cf. evidence of aerial photographs).

Four submarines were detected in the Sevastopol area as far as the southwestern Black Sea. Probably 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers, proceeding southeast, passed through the Kerch Peninsula area and the area off the northern part of the east coast on the night of 19/20 March.

According to an agent's report, 1 cruiser, 6 submarines, 10 transports, 10 destroyers and 4 minesweepers put in to Ghelenjik Bay from Batum at 0600 on 20 March. No confirmation by air reconnaissance. Such a heavy convoy has not been observed so far in the Black Sea. No air reconnaissance reports on Batum have been submitted during March.

According to aerial photographs taken on 19 March, there were few vessels in Poti harbor.

Theodosia was shelled between 0300 and 0400, probably by 2 cruisers.

Crimea:

At 0430 a patrol boat sighted a surfaced submarine about 1.5 km. offshore at Yalta. The submarine immediately submerged and made off.

Bulgarian/Rumanian Area:

At 1800 on 19 March, gunboats "Stihi" and "Dumitrescu" put in to Sulina. The transfer of naval ferry barge F 122 from Constantza to Varna was abandoned because of the weather. Naval Special Duties Detachment broke off the check sweep in Varna Bay because of the weather.

Danger of high tides at Galatz. Danube Flotilla is taking measures to prevent damage.

Ukraine:

No special incidents.

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21 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 6, squally, overcast, visibility 5 miles, very rough sea, temperature -5° C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station reported C-in-C Fleet at sea, probably in the old battleship. Report is confirmed insofar as the old battleship was not sighted in Novorossisk by visual reconnaissance at 0800. During the night of 20/21 March, 3 enemy warships shelled Sarigolsk and the heights around Theodosia.

Enemy shipping in port:

Sevastopol: 1 destroyer and 1 merchant ship.

Kerch: 1 tanker of 5,000 tons, 3 merchant ships, each 3,000 tons, 4 merchant ships totaling 1,000 tons: total freight tonnage 10,000 tons.

Kamish Burun: 2 merchant ships of 2,000 tons.

Novorossisk: 1 large destroyer, 1 freighter of 3,000 tons, 1 floating dock, 1 tanker of 5,000 tons, 2 freighters, each 4,000 tons, and 10 freighters, each 1,500 tons.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 cruiser, probably also cruiser D, 4 destroyers and 2 submarines between the west and south coasts of the Crimea and 1 cruiser at sea in an unidentified position. Effective from 22 March, in accordance with Main Naval D/F Station reports, detected cruisers will be denoted by letter in the War Diary. Cruiser A is probably "Voroshilov".

In an air attack on Sevastopol harbor on 20 March, 1 freighter or passenger vessel of 8,000 tons and 1 freighter of 2,000 tons were sunk.

One tanker of 7,000 tons is still on fire today. In the tank store at the northeastern corner of the harbor, 13 explosions occurred and heavy smoke developed. The electric power station near Inkerman was hit. Extensive fires in the center (?) of the south bay. On the morning of 21 March, a direct hit was scored on the radio station with a 1,000-kg. land mine.

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Own Situation:

Just before dawn on 21 March, planes mined Sevastopol harbor. Air Commander, South reported 5 positions of mines (BM 1000) in the north bay opposite the entrance to the south bay.

The check sweep along the Rumanian/Bulgarian coast by Danube Flotilla and Special Duties Detachment had to be abandoned because of the weather.

The radar station at Constantza has not been working since 0600.

The apparatus will finally be dismantled and transferred.

The flotilla engineer, Danube Flotilla flew on ice reconnaissance of the lower Danube and reported that it was still impossible to transfer the flotilla from Constantza to Sulina. The boats would be in great danger from drift ice.

Naval ferry barges Nos. 121, 130 and 143, which are to carry out the minelaying operation in Karkinitzki Bay, are lying at readiness in Varna. They will transfer to Constantza as soon as the weather improves.

Resumption of sea supplies:

The plans for sea supplies from Rumanian and Bulgarian ports to Ochakov-North are contained in an order which has been sent to the stations responsible for the execution of the assignment. The commencement date depends on when the sea routes are cleared. The plan is to divide the 9 available steamers and 3 tankers into groups of 3, which will proceed north at daily intervals with a 3-day turn around. When the first 3 vessels put out to the north, the group which wintered in Nikolaiev will return. The 4 Hungarian motor vessels will provide a shuttle service in pairs between the Danube ports and Ochakov-North. Escorting vessels will be Danube Flotilla, 1 flotilla of Special Duties Detachment, the Rumanian naval forces and the harbor defense flotillas of Odessa and Ochakov-North. Special Duties Detachment is responsible for the escort assignment ordered by Admiral, Black Sea.

Crimea:

Advance detachments of Naval Port Commander, Theodosia have arrived in Sudak and Koktebel.

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On 20 March, some land mines which had been laid as protection against landings exploded in Crimean ports as a result of the stormy seas.

No special incidents on the Army front near Sevastopol. A small-scale German attack on the eastern front was canceled.

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22 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 4, fair, visibility 10 miles,
sea 4, temperature -10° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to a radar location, the enemy fleet formation with the C-in-C aboard is about 50 miles north of Bafra Burnu. It is proceeding on a mean course of 300° in the direction of Sevastopol. Another formation comprising 1 heavy cruiser and 2 destroyers was sighted by air reconnaissance, course 320°, off the Caucasus coast near Tuapse.

Sarigolsk was again shelled by cruisers on the night of 21/22 March. While in action, the vessels were estimated to be 10 km. from Theodosia.

Enemy shipping in port:

According to aerial photographs, there were few ships in Kerch. In Kamish Burun there were slightly fewer vessels than on 19 March. No great change in Tuapse according to visual reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located a submarine at sea between Sevastopol and Constantza at 2100.

Lively radio traffic between C-in-C, Fleet (see above), Sevastopol and destroyers. Normal activity of patrol vessels.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

Ice conditions off the northwest coast have again deteriorated owing to increased cold. The route to Ochakov-North cannot therefore be swept as yet.

At Skadovsk there is pack ice up to 600 meters from the harbor.

No ice at Chorly.

Destroyer "Regina Maria" came out of dock at Constantza.

Steamer "Sulina" docked.

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Crimea/Ukraine:

Naval Port Commander 11 transferred to Theodosia. Preparations for minelaying.

Naval Port Commander 12 arrived in Skadovsk.

Sea Transportation Office, Kherson was opened on 21 March.

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23 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, slight coastal mist,
visibility 8 miles, calm sea, temperature
-8° C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station located various
destroyers in the open sea, one of them
midway between Sevastopol and Cape Kaliakra
at 2119. Up to now, only submarines have
been located so far west. Another destroyer
was located north of Bafra Burnu in the
evening and on the next morning between the
Crimea and the Rumanian coast. This means
that the destroyer must have proceeded at a
cruising speed of at least 23 knots, a
strikingly high speed, if the location is
to be accepted.

Air reconnaissance detected 2 steamers,
course east, obviously in Turkish territorial
waters near Inobolu and Bafra Burnu.
Reports of steamers in this area are also
unknown up to now. The nationality of the
steamers could not be identified.

In the evening a strongly escorted steamer
was observed south of Balaklava making for
Sevastopol. It was sunk by a bomber
formation at 1835.

According to a D/F report, the fleet formation
which has been at sea for the last few days
put in to an unknown base.

Throughout the day, no radio traffic was
intercepted between shore stations and naval
forces.

Enemy shipping in port (aerial photographs):

Tuapse: 2 more destroyers than on 18 March
and other tankers.

Novorossisk: Rough estimate of 6,000 tons
less than on 21 March.

In an air attack on Tuapse, 1 submarine was
sunk and another damaged for certain. Five
medium and small freighters also believed damaged.

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Own Situation:

Four motor minesweepers (FR) with combined sweeps checked the UMA minefield south of Tuzla. Depth keeping 10 meters. No mines swept.

Three naval ferry barges put in to Constantza from Varna in the afternoon for operation "Lex". Check sweeps by gunboats "Dumitrescu" and "Stihi" had to be abandoned on the mine-free route to the north because of thick drift ice.

Special Duties Detachment checked the northern entrance to Varna Bay without result.

A drifting mine was sighted near Sosopol and dealt with by some Bulgarians.

Ukraine/Crimea:

No incidents.

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24 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, coastal mist, visibility
5 miles, smooth sea, temperature -4° C.

Enemy Situation:

The destroyer which passed from east to west on the night of 22/23 March was again located by Main Naval D/F Station at 1602 about 50 miles south of the southern tip of the Crimea. Air Commander, South at once dispatched armed reconnaissance planes. At 1830 a convoy comprising 1 freighter of 4,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 5 escort vessels was attacked south of Sevastopol without success.

Throughout the day there was lively activity of destroyers and M.T.B.s in the narrow Sevastopol sea area. Two submarines were also sighted from land, obviously connected with the above-mentioned convoy. After the sinking of a similar transport yesterday, the enemy has decided upon the strictest protection measures.

According to a report from Main Naval D/F Station, C-in-C, Fleet is again at sea, probably aboard cruiser A. Cruisers D, F and E are also at sea in various areas.

Normal activity of guardboats and M.T.B.s near the bases.

Aerial photographs of Kerch and Tuapse reveal no essential changes.

The direct hit mentioned in the success report of 21 March was scored on the dockyard installations and not on Sevastopol radio station. In another attack on Tuapse, a steamer was set on fire.

Own Situation:

Trials of destroyer "Regina Maria".
"Delfinul" on exercises. Special Duties Detachment checked the area off Kaliakra.

Readiness:

Motor minesweeper FR 8 operational from 25 March and FR 2 non-operational from 24 - 27 March owing to engine trouble. The boat "Lykurgos" belonging to Group Helleparth will be ready to sail from 25 March.

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"Dumitrescu" non-operational owing to a seized piston in the main engine. Duration of repairs unknown.

Tug "Amsel" non-operational owing to engine trouble. Duration of repairs unknown.

Crimea:

Minelaying begun in Yalta.

Two batteries of Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 707 arrived in Genichesk with 2 guns. The rest are en route. Ammunition still in Odessa.

Land Situation:

After an interval of a few days, the enemy again attacked on the eastern front in the Crimea. All attacks were repulsed.

CONFIDENTIAL

25 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SW winds, force 1, heavy coastal mist,
visibility 2 miles, calm sea, temperature
-3° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to visual reconnaissance, there were more ships in Kerch than on 23 March. The destroyers and submarines reported off Sevastopol in the last few days were again in evidence. No essential changes in shipping in port according to aerial photographs. It should be noted that since 16 March, contrary to previous practice, reports on the main harbors have been received almost daily, but there have been no reports from the southeastern ports of Poti, Batum etc.

No special incidents according to Main Naval D/F Station.

Supplementary report for 22 and 23 March from Rumanian Navy:

"On the nights of 21/22 and 22/23 March, engine noises were heard about 2300 from the island of Serpilor and lights were observed in the northeast and east."

In the reports on the enemy, it is striking that at 2100 on 22 March a submarine was located midway between Sevastopol and Cape Kaliakra and at 2119 on 23 March a destroyer was detected in the same position. There may be some connection with the Serpilor observations.

Reports of successes: In the last air attack on Tuapse, the 5 merchant ships were not damaged but a freighter of 2,000 tons was sunk.

Own Situation:

Crimea:

0310

Ak Mechet and Dzhariulgach were bombed, but no damage was caused. This may indicate that the enemy believes sea transports to be using these ports.

The naval observation post for observing shipping off Sevastopol is now functioning.

CONFIDENTIAL

Naval Port Commander, Skadovsk reported in connection with the planned operation "Lex" that the coast of Karkinitzki Bay was free of ice from Klarovka as far as Chorly. In Dzhariulgach Bay there is an open channel up to 400 meters off Skadovsk.

CONFIDENTIAL

26 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, visibility 8 miles, calm sea,
temperature 2° C.

Enemy Situation:

No air reconnaissance reports. Main Naval D/F Station reported lively activity of M.T.B.s and guardboats along the entire east coast. Very slight Fleet radio traffic. Between 1300 and 1500, Russian air reconnaissance planes appeared off the western Black Sea coast between Burgas and Akkermann. Two planes were intercepted, one of which was 40 miles south of Balaklava on return flight at 1600.

Own Situation:

The ice reconnaissance flown by Air Commander, South in Karkinitzki Bay showed that the ice conditions favored the intended minelaying in the inner part of Karkinitzki Bay. The seaward sides of Tendra Peninsula and Dzhariulgach are free of ice and Chorly entrance is open. There is still soft ice about 10 - 12 cm. thick up to 400 meters off Skadovsk.

Destroyer "Regina Maria" on trials in the forenoon. The naval ferry barges due to carry out the minelaying operation were on firing practice.

Special Duties Detachment checked the southern entrance to Varna Bay. In the morning, Bulgarian reconnaissance planes reported drifting mines off the coast near the Turkish frontier. In the same area there were life-belts and pieces of wood.

Readiness:

Destroyer "Regina Maria" operational.

Destroyer "Regele Ferdinand" non-operational to go into dock.

Crimea:

Further mines were laid off Yalta.

Land Situation:

Near Sevastopol: Weak artillery and mortar fire.

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Eastern front: The heavy enemy attacks were not continued.

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27 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No report submitted.

Enemy Situation:

According to visual reconnaissance, there are 2 medium steamers in Sevastopol. They must have put in since 24 March, as the harbor was almost empty then.

There is shipping totaling 24,000 tons in Kamish Burun. Off Tamanskaya today, there are many small freighters of up to 2,000 tons instead of the usual boats.

At 0040 several escorted steamers were sighted near Anapa and to the south; some were steering northeast and others southeast.

No important activity off Sevastopol.

According to Main Naval D/F Station, patrol activity off the entire east coast is again normal, but radio traffic is slight.

Own Situation:

Three motor minesweepers (FR) probed the area from $44^{\circ} 40' N$, $29^{\circ} 30' E$ (south of St. George). No mines swept. Special Duties Detachment checked the inner part of Varna Bay. A mine was cut 150 meters from the wreck "Carol" and it exploded as the result of a live run.

Air Commander, South was asked to provide air reconnaissance for operation "Lex" north of $45^{\circ} N$ from the Crimea to the Rumanian/Bessarabian coast.

Crimea:

The rest of the mines were laid off Yalta.

Supplementary report: From 26 March a sea rescue plane will be stationed in Ak Mechet.

Land Situation:

Surprisingly quiet on both fronts and in the air.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 1, fog, visibility 200 meters, temperature 3° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to Main Naval D/F Station, C-in-C, Fleet is at sea near the central part of the east coast with the old battleship, cruiser A, 1 flotilla leader and 5 destroyers. Of these destroyers one was in the southwestern Black Sea, fairly near the Turkish coast, at 1415. Another was located further north at 1950. Taken in conjunction with the locations obtained on 23 and 24 March, this means that the enemy is forming a position line from northwest to southeast between the Crimea and the Bosphorus. Cruisers D and F are still at sea in unidentified positions.

At 0900 the battleship was sighted in Poti (see above). Since 25 March, shipping in Novorossisk has slightly increased.

Ice situation: The ice in Odessa harbor is expected to melt shortly. Kherson reported the first drift ice on the Dnieper after a long period of fast ice. Dnieper estuary still frozen. The ice limit now lies only 100 meters from Skadovsk harbor entrance. The ice in Genichesk harbor has also broken up.

Danube shipping traffic is again in full swing from Giurgiu to Regensburg.

Own Situation:

Minefield sections A (170 UMA) and B (170 UMB) were laid as scheduled northwest of Constantza as a flanking minefield. U-boats protected the minelaying formation of motor minesweepers (FR) of Danube Flotilla.

Operation "Lex" was postponed as there was thick fog in the morning off Constantza.

All competent stations were informed by radiogram a few hours beforehand and were cautioned as to use of teletype for retransmission. It was necessary to use radio as there were no sure and quick courier connections. The postponement was also announced by radiogram.

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Crimea:

The Bulgarian minesweeping formation checked the area off Ahtopol.

The FMB minefield was laid off Valta. In view of the inadequate minelaying facilities, 4 watching buoys were made available. They will be removed in suitable weather.

Land Situation:

Quiet day on both fronts.

Enemy measures may indicate another heavy attack on the eastern front.

CONFIDENTIAL

29 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, almost completely overcast,
visibility 3 miles, sea 1, temperature 3° C.

Enemy Situation:

On 28 March, air reconnaissance planes systematically examined enemy harbors. Admiral, Black Sea reckons on the basis of a rough evaluation of the photographs that there is still a total of 140,000 G.R.T. of enemy merchant shipping and 30,000 G.R.T. tanker space.

The following vessels were observed:

1 battleship, 3 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, 2 flotilla leaders, 1 large destroyer, 15 destroyers, 8 torpedoboats, 32 submarines and a number of M.T.B.s, minesweepers, auxiliary vessels and special vessels.

Main Naval D/F Station presumed that 3 - 4 enemy submarines were in the western Black Sea. Two were located between the Crimea and the Rumanian coast (reconnaissance line).

Own Situation:

Rumanian Area:

Operation "Lex" must again be postponed because of the weather. Rumanian naval forces are preparing to lay minefield sections C and D.

As there will be no more drift ice in the Danube in a few days, Danube Flotilla has been directed to prepare to transfer all boats to Sulina as soon as possible.

Bulgarian Area:

0945 The Achtopol area was checked for mines without result.

Motor vessel "Rila" put in to Burgas unescorted from Istanbul. She will soon transfer to Varna to be investigated and chartered.

Ukraine/Crimea:

No incidents.

Land Situation:

No enemy infantry or artillery operations. Lively air activity with attacks on Sadki and Sarabus.

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30 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 6, overcast to cloudy,
visibility 1 - 2 miles, snow, sea 4,
temperature 1^o C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station reported nothing of
interest. Cruiser D is at sea in an
unidentified position.

Air reconnaissance again observed an assembly
of small merchant ships off Tamanskaya.

Report of successes: Torpedo bombers
successfully attacked a freighter of 4,000
G.R.T. in the Novorossisk area on 29 March.
She was beached near Novorossisk.

Own Situation:

Rumanian Area:

Operation "Lex" again postponed because of
the weather.

Rumanian Naval Command reported that "Murgescu"
was operational with limitations as the few
engine room personnel could only tend one
engine. Reinforcements are being sent.

This shows the effect of the exchange of
personnel now in progress in the Rumanian
Navy. This exchange was caused partly
by the need for crews for new U-boats and
E-boats, and partly by Antonescu's order that
each officer must have at least 6 months
on operations. I have prevented one such
exchange of officers affecting about 20 naval
officers. Although the Commander-in-Chief
promised by letter and word to inform me in
advance of any changes, this was not done.
Antonescu understood my attitude and now the
exchanges are to be carried out in rotation
and the necessary allowance is to be made for
handing over. This will not substantially
reduce the state of training of the naval forces.

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping operations because of the
weather.

Ukraine/Crimea:

No incidents.

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Land Situation:

Quiet day. 11th Army H.Q. presumes that the enemy is planning to attack.

In accordance with a directive issued by Naval Group South on 28 March and after a discussion with v. Kleist, the newly appointed Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks), I reported to Naval Group South my plans for minelaying operations off the north coast of the Sea of Azov and in Kerch Strait:

1. The enemy's behavior during December 1941 shows that the Russians will continue to try to take our bases whose harbor installations are necessary for them to carry out effective landings. They will use every means at their disposal, relying particularly on flanking attacks. If they are repulsed at favorable landing points, then they will land again at other places with more men and material.
2. The type of coast and the depths of water are almost nowhere effective for preventing landings.
3. As mines are not plentiful, the operation must be confined to certain focal points:
 - a. Harbor installations.
 - b. Various areas from which, by occupying them for a short time, the enemy could endanger our operations.
4. Kerch Strait cannot be mined until the land situation on Kerch Peninsula is clarified.
5. The motor fishing vessels of Coastal Defense Flotilla, Sea of Azov can be used as mine-carriers by Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine and the Malta boats by Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.
6. I propose to allocate the 893 FMC mines recalled from Germany to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine for the north coast of the Sea of Azov with Mariupol as the target area and the 381 FMB and 350 UMA mines from Linz to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.

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31 March, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 6, overcast to cloudy,
visibility 1 - 2 miles, snow, sea 4,
temperature 1° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to Main Naval D/F Station, the
3 destroyers, which had hitherto been
operating southwest of the Crimea, are now
proceeding towards the southern part of the
east coast, probably to Batum.

One submarine (probably damaged) put out from
the western Black Sea to the east. There
is a submarine tender off the southern part
of the east coast.

No special air reconnaissance reports.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

The weather prevented our naval forces from
operating. All the Danube in my command is free
of ice.

No incidents.

Ukraine/Crimea:

No incidents. Several mines from the
Yalta minefield have broken loose in the
rough sea and have been detonated. Naval
Shore Commander, Crimea issued directives
for the laying of the minefield off Alushta.

Land Situation:

No change.

(Signed) Götting.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 APRIL, 1942

PG/31508

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1 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

NNW winds, force 4, overcast, visibility 5 miles, snow, moderate sea, temperature 1° C.

Enemy Situation:

The enemy has changed the radio callsigns and codes of their naval forces, naval air arm and coastal defenses.

Cruiser A arrived in the sea area south of the Crimea from the eastern Black Sea during the night of 31 March/1 April. Presumably C-in-C Fleet is on board.

There was an enemy air formation in the area between the Crimea and the Rumanian coast on the morning of 1 April.

Cruiser D is in Novorossisk.

Two unidentified vessels were located, but no deductions were possible from their position.

Air reconnaissance reported slight supply traffic and patrol activity.

Own Situation:

Rumanian Area:

As the weather seems to be gradually becoming calmer, minefield sections C and D will probably be laid during the next few days and operation "Lex" will be carried out.

Gunboat "Stihi", which put out at 1730 on 31 March for salvage operations off Tuszla where there seemed to be a drifting wreck, ran aground and was reported non-operational.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Ukraine/Crimoa:

Naval Port Commander, Theodosia has performed the remarkable feat of raising a 19-meter iron motor boat with 120 h.p. engine from 7 meters of water without the aid of divers.

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During the day there were several air raids on Theodosia. No damage reported.

Land Situation:

Unchanged.

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2 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0900):

W winds, force 2, cloudy, visibility 10 miles,
sea 2, temperature 4° C.

Enemy Situation:

The Air Force reported the following successes:
1 tanker of 8,000 G.R.T. sunk and 1 fighter shot
down during an attack on a convoy south of Kerch
Strait; direct hit scored on a freighter of
5,000 G.R.T. near Kamish Burun, also 4 fighters
shot down.

Main Naval D/F Station reported cruiser D in the
northern Black Sea and an unidentified cruiser
in the central Black Sea. Between 1500 and
1700, planes were active in a southerly direction
in the area off the southern tip of the Crimea
(see attacks on our forces).

Own Situation:

Rumanian Area:

0430 Destroyer "Regina Maria" and 4 naval ferry barges
put out for operation "Lex". Naval Shore
Commanders, Ukraine and Crimea, Air Commander,
South, 4th Air Force and Naval Liaison Officer
to 11th Army H.Q. have been notified of the
operation by radio.

The air reconnaissance north of 45° N requested
from Air Commander, South was carried out between
1030 and 1430. Nothing sighted apart from our
own vessels.

Between 1800 and 2000 the formation was unsuccess-
fully attacked by 3 Russian bombers using flares.
Destroyer "Regina Maria" succeeded in drawing the
bombers off, so that at about 2000 at point Blue
24 the 4 naval ferry barges were able to turn off
to the east unobserved.

0700 The minelaying formation of "Murgescu", "Dacia",
"Marasesti", "Sborul" and 4 motor minesweepers
(FR) put out to lay minefield sections C and D.

1600 After carrying out this task, the minelaying
formation was attacked by 3 Russian bombers on
route Green south of St. George Arm. "Dacia"
was slightly damaged at the bows and 1 man was
severely wounded and 3 were slightly wounded;
aboard "Sborul" there was splinter damage and

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German Warrant Engineer Fey was killed and 6 men were wounded; both engines failed aboard motor minesweeper FR 2 and she was towed in.

1617 Bombers attacked Sulina. No damage. According to a Rumanian report, Kilia Arm and Ochakov-South were bombed about 1100. Details not known.

There have now been quite definitely 3, probably 4, bomber attacks on ships and harbor installations in the Danube Delta. Probably these attacks have taken place following air reconnaissance reports when formations have sailed. During the last few days, there have been reports of isolated Russian reconnaissance planes off the Rumanian coast.

Bulgarian Area:

Special Duties Detachment carried out check sweeps in the inner Varna Bay and in the neighborhood of the wreck "Carol". No mines swept.

1000 Motor vessel "Rila" put out from Burgas for Varna without escort.

1620 "Rila" put in to Varna.

Ukraine/Crimea:

No incidents.

Land Situation:

Vladislavovska was bombarded from the sea during the night by 2 warships. Fighting broke out again in the northwestern sector. Otherwise the day passed quietly.

Increased movements and artillery reinforcements indicate preparations for attack.

CONFIDENTIAL

3 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0900):

W winds, force 2, cloudy, visibility 15 miles,
sea 2, temperature 6° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to a radio intercept report, cruiser A was in the sea area off Tuapse during the evening. There was also an Air Commander in the same area. Cruiser D was suspected in the area south of the Crimea or in the central Black Sea, while cruiser E was at sea in an unidentified position. Lively aircraft radio traffic from a formation off the northern and central parts of the east coast.

The enemy has beached the tanker reported as sunk on 2 April. She is on fire with heavy black clouds of smoke coming from her.

According to an air reconnaissance report, the enemy is showing beacons at the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. Characteristics are the same as in peacetime.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

Naval ferry barges Nos. 127, 130, 139 and 143 which were on operation "Lex" put in to Skadovsk at 0915. No incidents on the prescribed route. The morning reconnaissance planes detailed by Air Commander, South did not sight any enemy forces in the reconnaissance area. At 0950 destroyer "Regina Maria" put in to Constantza from operation "Lex".

Special Duties Detachment did not check the area off Varna for mines because of bad weather.

"Brünhild" moved from Galatz to Sulina with motor minesweepers FR 1, 3, 9 and 11.

Readiness:

Torpedoboat "Sborul" probably non-operational until 4 April on account of several breaks in her boiler tube.

Major Securius, Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force, reported by telephone that he will have the following planes operational on 4 April:

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4 Cant, 1 Do 24 and 2 He 114. Operations by 6 Blenheim planes possible if Air Station, Craiova can be used.

Crimea:

From 1 April, Meteorological Station, Yalta is giving restricted service.

One FMB mine drifted ashore at Yalta and was destroyed.

Enemy warships bombarded places on the Kerch headland during the night of 2/3 April.

Land Situation:

Only slight activity of enemy artillery and nuisance fire by mortars on both Crimean fronts. Air activity was slight on both sides because of bad weather.

In the Donetz area, the enemy attacked with heavy artillery and tanks near and southeast of Slaviansk.

CONFIDENTIAL

4 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, no cloud, visibility 10 miles, sea 2,
temperature 2° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to aerial photographs, there are 4 submarines, 1 floating crane, 1 probable floating crane, 1 freighter of 300 G.R.T. and 45 small coastal vessels in the south bay at Sevastopol. It therefore appears that, despite the frequent air attacks, the enemy is still using this harbor as a submarine base.

A merchant ship of 3,000 G.R.T. was seen proceeding with escort through Kerch Strait. The tanker beached off Anapa is still burning.

Main Naval D/F Station reported radio traffic as slight. Cruiser A is in the sea area off Tuapse. Some submarines were detected in the Sevastopol area. An Air Commander was located off Anapa.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

"Krimhild" moved from Constantza to Sulina with a second group of motor minesweepers (FR).

Torpedoboat "Smeul" proceeded from Sulina to Constantza.

Motor vessel "Marianne" proceeded from Constantza to Varna.

Special Duties Detachment, Varna checked the northern entrance to Varna Bay according to plan.

Naval Port Commander, Odessa reported a visit of Marshal Antonescu on 2 April. He inspected the batteries of Army Coastal Artillery Detachment 906 and also the harbor. Believing it more important to keep the harbor in use than to carry out demolition work for defense purposes, he instructed Naval Port Commander to submit suggestions for the improvement of the harbor defenses.

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Crimea:

Marshal Antonescu was in Eupatoria on 2 April and in Simferopol on 3 April.

Land Situation:

Both Crimean fronts were quiet except for slight artillery and mortar fire. The enemy is digging in on the Kerch front.

CONFIDENTIAL

5 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

N winds, force 3, overcast, coastal haze, visibility 5 miles, sea 2, temperature 4⁰ C.

An unidentified vessel was located 60 miles east of Cape Kaliakra at 0918. Situation report later indicated that this was probably a submarine. The position located lies on the route from Sevastopol to Burgas Bay.

Further locations 60 miles westsouthwest of Sevastopol and off Yalta.

Aerial photographs show many vessels in Kamish Burun.

Own Situation:

A Rumanian report states: "North of point 15, off Constantza, tug "Forsch" and E-boat "Viscolul" attacked a submarine. Following depth charges, a large patch of oil and air bubbles were observed." The report is being investigated.

Group Lex is lying at Skadovsk, obviously idle. An inquiry was sent during the forenoon to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine about his plans for these boats, but so far no reply has been received.

Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South reported on the ice conditions in the Sea of Azov: "Broken ice from Primorsko Akhtari to Sivash; similar conditions in northern part of Kerch Strait." From this report it seems that it will be possible for steamers to proceed through the Sea of Azov, but not boats as yet.

A clear understanding was reached with Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force that he alone is responsible for requests for planes for naval operational purposes. Direct requests to 4th Air Force or Air Commander, South to be made only in urgent cases, and then Naval Liaison Officer to be informed. Admiral, Black Sea pointed out that naval operations must not be disclosed by careless use of the telephone by the Air Force.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Dumitrescu" operational.

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Ukraine:

The Varvarovka bridge at Nikolaiev has drifted away as a result of the snowstorm and moving ice. Parts of the bridge were salvaged by Naval Port Commander, Nikolaiev.

Crimea:

Marshal Antonescu is in Yalta with Naval Shore Commander, Crimea who is representing C-in-C 11th Army H.Q..

Land Situation:

No special incidents on either front. According to deserters' statements, the enemy intends to renew the attack on both fronts between 5 and 10 April.

On the Donetz front local attacks with tank support were repulsed. There were some hand-to-hand engagements.

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6 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, visibility 6 miles, sea 1, temperature
-1° C.

Main Naval D/F Station reported a total of 4 locations of unidentified vessels in various areas. Two of these locations lie on the known convoy route from Poti to Sevastopol. One of them is believed to be a group of destroyers coming from the east. According to observations, a convoy may be approaching.

Air reconnaissance reported 1 small escorted merchant ship off Anapa, proceeding to Kerch Strait. Such convoys are now more frequently observed with fighter protection.

Own Situation:

Commander, Danube Flotilla was prevented by rough sea from leaving Sulina to sweep the enemy minefield off St. George Arm.

The naval ferry barges of Group Lex put out from Skadovsk and laid minefield section 1 according to plan.

Special Duties Detachment checked the northern entrance to Varna Bay. No mines swept.

E-boat "Viscolul" was unable to discover anything near point 15 where the enemy submarine was presumed sunk. The water is 40 meters deep, which makes the search difficult.

Tanker "Le Progres" and motor vessel "Rila" transferred from Varna to Constantza.

Crimea:

On 5 April, a Russian naval mine was washed up near Eupatoria and detonated.

A mine transport has put in to Genichesk.

Land Situation:

The enemy is now more active on the Sevastopol front. Army H.Q. suspects they are bringing up reinforcements.

Enemy remarkably quiet on the eastern front.

CONFIDENTIAL

7 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, slight coastal haze, visibility up to 10 miles, temperature 0° C.

Enemy Situation:

Observation of enemy radio traffic yielded little information. Only slight traffic was reported.

According to aerial photographs, the freighters in Novorossisk harbor totaled 60,000 G.R.T. at 0712. Aerial photographs showed that at 1208 the merchant shipping had increased by 10,000 G.R.T. and warships had also arrived. Aerial photographs also showed 30,000 G.R.T. at Tuapse.

Own Situation:

Group Lex laid minefield section 2 according to plan.

The laying group, comprising naval ferry barges F 130 and F 139, was spotted from Bakal on the Crimean coast by Rumanian troops who fired upon them in the belief that they were enemy vessels. No damage was done. The German Reinforced Coastguard Control Service also reported the naval ferry barges as 2 enemy warships, one of them a cruiser. This critical situation arose for the following reasons:

1. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea had obviously not circulated information to all coastal posts in his area, although this was expressly ordered by Admiral, Black Sea.
2. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine did not inform Naval Shore Commander, Crimea on 6 April about the plans for Group Lex. Moreover, the reports by Naval Port Commander, Skadovsk and Group Lex on the sailing were not addressed to "Naval Shore Commander, Crimea".
3. The sailing report was not submitted early enough. Instructions from Admiral, Black Sea lay it down that sailing reports must be passed to the radio station for transmission at least an hour in advance.
4. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine did not clearly understand that he was responsible for the execution of the operation, although

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on entering the operational area Group Lex came under his control.

The Staff directing operations must give some thought to the essential preliminaries even in the case of a minor coastal operation.

The authorities concerned were notified of their error at once.

Commander, Danube Flotilla swept 1 mine from the enemy minefield in St. George Arm. The mine shell sank before it could be fired on. Plans have been made for systematic clearing of the minefield.

Tug "Forsch" patrolled and checked the area as far as Green 15 on 6 and 7 April. No incidents.

Gunboat "Dumitrescu" carried out an exploratory sweep to point CN 3. No mines swept.

No minesweeping activity by Special Duties Detachment. Maintenance work was carried out.

Isolated bombing raids on Theodosia during the night of 6/7 April.

Naval Communications Station, Karacha (near Cape Tarkhankutzki) was opened.

Land Situation:

The enemy was quiet on both Crimean fronts.

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8 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, slight coastal haze, visibility up to 10 miles, sea 1, temperature 0° C.

Aerial photographs showed the following:
Novorossisk: Increase in shipping since 7 April.
Sevastopol: 1 destroyer, 3 submarines (1 in dry dock), 1 minesweeper and 60 boats and small coastal vessels.
Tuapse: No major changes.

A large, heavily escorted steamer approached Kerch Strait from the south during the morning: she was observed twice by visual reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported slight patrol activity generally. There are some submarines in unidentified positions in the western and central Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian/Rumanian Area:

Commander, Danube Flotilla swept 2 mines from the minefield in St. George Arm. The mines cut were spherical in shape with several small appendages: their surfaces were very much overgrown. Presumably they were equipped with inertia contact firing and a charge of approximately 30 kg. Both mines were fired on and sank very rapidly. Probably they had automatic sinking devices.

Group Lex is compensating compasses in Skadovsk. The Bulgarian motor vessel "Rila" proceeded from Constantza to Sulina escorted by "Smcul". "Rila" is to be converted into a submarine chaser in Turnu Severin. "Smeul" returned to Constantza during the evening. Destroyer "Marasesti" is trying out her bow protection gear.

Marshal Antonescu arrived in Sulina during the morning and proceeded further up the Danube during the afternoon.

Readiness:

E-boat "Viscolul" operational with limitations.

Motor minesweeper FR 8 (belonging to Commander, Danube Flotilla) non-operational for repairs to fuel pumps.

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Naval ferry barges Nos. 134 and 144 are on firing exercises off Burgas.

Crimea:

On 7 April, a coastal battery shelled an enemy submarine off Koreis, west of Yalta near Cape Aitodor. Battery thinks direct hits were scored. The patrol boat sent out to investigate could not find anything.

A drifting FMB mine was detonated by artillery fire off Yalta.

Land Situation:

The enemy was generally quiet on the Sevastopol and eastern fronts. Lively partisan activity in the Stary Crimea area. Slight enemy air activity.

Apart from nuisance artillery fire by both sides, no special incidents in the Donetz area.

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9 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

S winds, force 4, almost entirely overcast, slight coastal haze, visibility 6 miles, sea 3, temperature 4° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air Commander, South flew morning and afternoon reconnaissance (without obvious reason) over the whole central Black Sea to the Turkish coast. No vessels sighted.

A shore station sighted a light cruiser with 2 merchant ships south of Balaklava, course south.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located an unknown unit 60 miles south of Kerch.

According to a radio intercept report, 1 flotilla leader and 1 destroyer are proceeding from the southern part of the east coast, probably to Sevastopol. Usual activity of patrol forces.

Own Situation:

Commander, Danube Flotilla broke off minesweeping operations owing to the rough sea and returned to Sulina about noon.

Group Lex is checking compass deviations in Skadovsk harbor.

Special Duties Detachment checked the southern entrance to Varna Bay. No mines swept.

Motor vessel "Rila" is proceeding from Sulina to Galatz.

Iron Gates Group, Danube Flotilla is leaving Russe on the morning of 10 April to proceed to the operational area.

Motor sailing vessel "Marianne" proceeded from Varna to Constantza.

Readiness:

"Stihi" operational.

"Dacia" non-operational: scheduled to proceed to dock 10 April.

"Dumitrescu" temporarily non-operational for repairs to her main engine.

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Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea suspects aerial minelaying by 3 enemy flying boats off Eupatoria between 1515 and 1540 when Sadki was under air attack.

During the night of 8/9 April, bombs fell directly in front of the quarters of the Motor Transportation Company of the Naval Shore Commander in Simferopol. Three men were severely wounded and 7 slightly wounded. Buildings badly damaged, but no damage to trucks.

Land Situation:

Slight nuisance fire by enemy artillery on the Sevastopol front. Continuous bombing attacks.

Eastern front: Enemy resumed attacks during the morning with strong support from artillery and planes.

CONFIDENTIAL

10 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

N winds, force 1, almost entirely overcast, moderate haze, visibility 3 miles, sea 1, temperature 5° C.

Enemy Situation:

From aerial photographs it seems that between 7 and 8 April the enemy brought up about 10,000 G.R.T. of shipping from Tuapse to Novorossisk which was already crowded. This action seems to indicate plans for an operation, as the enemy has risked the increased danger of air attack in massing ships in Novorossisk. The Air Force has already made successful attacks on Tuapse and Novorossisk, but no details are yet available.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located enemy planes in the area west of Sevastopol and Yalta extending south to approximately 44° N. They may be engaged on air reconnaissance, directed against misreported vessels or perhaps the enemy has been misled by their intelligence agencies and has overestimated the German forces.

The German morning reconnaissance planes over the southeast Crimean coast did not sight anything.

On the basis of yesterday's air reconnaissance reports, Air Commander, South is extremely doubtful about the reliability of observations of ships at sea made from shore by Army and Air Force posts in front of Sevastopol. The only reports he considers of importance are those from the Naval Observation Station.

Air reconnaissance of the east coast of the Sea of Azov showed massing of boats in the harbors.

According to a situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, naval forces are maintaining radio silence.

Own Situation:

Commander, Danube Flotilla carried out a check sweep from Sulina northwards on route Green to point 23 and Gibrieni Bay. Points 22 and 23 were marked with buoys.

Owing to a change in the current at a time when they were out of sight of land and had no opportunity to take a fix, a group of boats ran on to the UMA minefield off Gura Kilia. As the

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depth setting was 8 meters, they lost a considerable amount of gear. Cause was probably inaccurate depth-keeping of the sweeps at slow speed. Gunboats are to check later.

Group Lex and naval ferry barge No. 143 made a reconnaissance of the sea channel and harbor at Chorly: depths and remaining buoys were checked.

Special Duties Detachment checked the southern entrance to Varna Bay, also Burgas Bay. No mines swept.

Readiness:

"Dacia" in dock at Constantza.

"Sborul", "Stihi" and "Dumitrescu" operational.

On orders from Group South, the 400 EMC mines of the Mines and Barrage Command, Constantza, which were reported unfit for use, are not to be exchanged in Germany, but are to be overhauled and put in order at Constantza by auxiliary personnel sent from Germany.

Land Situation:

All attacks on the eastern front were repulsed. General quiet in the Crimea. 66 enemy tanks were destroyed and a further 26 immobilized by gunfire.

Isolated sorties by enemy scouting parties on the eastern front in the Donetz area. On the northern front enemy sorties were repelled by our defensive fire.

CONFIDENTIAL

11 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

ESE winds, force 1, fog, visibility 200 meters,
sea 1, temperature 5° C.

Enemy Situation:

The main body of the Fleet is lying in Poti. Aerial photographs reveal 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers (one of them in dock), 5 torpedoboats, 15 submarines, 1 minesweeper and 17 M.T.B.s.

Batum (visual reconnaissance): 1 heavy cruiser and 2 destroyers.

The bulk of the merchant shipping is massed in Novorossisk.

Next to Poti, Ochemchiri contains the largest number of submarines. The reason for this may be the danger of air raids in these harbors.

The aerial photographs do not give any clear picture of the results of the air raids on Novorossisk and Tuapse on 10 and 11 April.

In the early morning air reconnaissance intercepted 1 inward and 1 outward bound transport on the Novorossisk-Kerch route a short distance from port. Obviously the enemy only uses this route during darkness. Some of the beacons in Kerch Strait were burning.

Coastal shipping and submarine and patrol activity off Sevastopol.

Air Commander, South observed a small boat in Sevastopol harbor, obviously using sweeping gear. The boat was towing an object at the end of a 100-meter line. There was a violent explosion behind this object.

According to Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, radio traffic was generally slight.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian/Rumanian Area:

Commander, Danube Flotilla proceeded to Bugaz with both groups of motor minesweepers (FR) and "Krimhild". Five motor minesweepers (FR) put in to Bugaz at 1845, while the other vessels anchored off the coast because of fog.

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As naval ferry barge No. 127 belonging to Group Lex could not carry out her plan to make a reconnaissance of the coast off Klarovka because of fog, she put in to Skadovsk.

Crimea:

Enemy forces attempted a landing with small boats near Popovka, 30 km. northwest of Eupatoria, but were repelled by artillery fire from coastal batteries and machine-gunfire.

Land Situation:

After the failure of the attack on the eastern front in the Crimea, the enemy remained quiet. A great defensive success. Final results were 72 enemy tanks destroyed and 29 immobilized by gunfire.

No special incidents in the Donetz area.

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12 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No report submitted.

Enemy Situation:

According to a situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, the main center of destroyer activity is the Crimean area and central Black Sea. Cruiser D is off the central part of the east coast.

One destroyer was located out in the eastern Black Sea. The location lies on the line joining Poti and the point south of Sevastopol where the earlier Sevastopol convoys were seen to change course to the north. Thus it seems probable that the enemy is keeping to the old route.

Aerial photographs give an exhaustive picture of shipping in Novorossisk and Tuapse from 7 to 11 April. Clearly the calm on the Crimean fronts has again given our Air Force more freedom of movement. The report of minesweeping in Sevastopol harbor mentioned on 11 April did not come from air reconnaissance, but from an Army source. Seven to 8 underwater explosions were observed. The report seemed less reliable, when it was learned later that no towing line had been observed and that the eddy 100 meters astern might have been the wake of the vessel.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

Commander, Danube Flotilla put in to Bugaz with "Krimhild" and 3 motor minesweepers (FR).

The Air Force has continually been dropping mines in Kerch Strait during the period 3 - 11 April. There are altogether about 70 mines in the Pavlovski transit between Kamish Burun and Eltigen. The beacons were an obvious incentive for this measure.

Readiness:

Group Lex is lying in harbor.

"Delfinul" is carrying out her trials.

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No minesweeping activity by Special Duties Detachment.

Land Situation:

Eastern front: The enemy continued to make subsidiary attacks with weak forces. All attacks were repulsed, although the enemy Air Force was far superior to our own.

Sevastopol front: The enemy is continuing to reinforce their positions.

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13 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

NNW winds, force 2, fair, visibility 10 miles,
sea 1, temperature 6° C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza discovered the old battleship at sea during the afternoon, probably in the southeastern Black Sea. The destroyers mentioned in yesterday's report as being in the central area are still at sea. Patrol activity near the bases has decreased. In the afternoon a large freighter put in to Sevastopol. The enemy put up a smoke screen round her berth and flew protective patrols. Presumably she is a valuable ship.

After our first reconnaissance flight, Tuapse harbor was also screened in smoke.

Air reconnaissance twice reported a destroyer off the central part of the east coast, proceeding along the coast at high speed to the northwest.

Own Situation:

Vice-Admiral Fleischer has taken over as Commanding Admiral, Black Sea.

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

Danube Flotilla did not put out because of bad weather. The boats were engaged on maintenance work.

In preparation for escorting steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg", Special Duties Detachment checked the northern entrance to Burgas Bay, while the Bulgarian minesweeping formation operated in the southern entrance.

Readiness:

"Romulus" proceeded from Sulina to Galatz to refuel.

Boats of Iron Gates Group, Danube Flotilla have reached the following positions on passage to the operational area: "Gernot" in Orsova, "Alzei" and "Tronje" in Turnu Severin.

U-boat "Delfinul" has successfully completed her trials.

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- Gunboat "Stihi" still non-operational.

Land Situation:

The enemy is bringing up reliefs for the troops on the Sevastopol and eastern fronts in the Crimea.

On the eastern front, parts of a Rumanian cavalry division, after a short exchange of fire, repulsed 3 boats approaching the Sivash shore 11 km. north of Islam Terek.

Reconnaissance in the area in front of 17th Army seems to indicate that the enemy is regrouping their forces for defense in the Donetz area. Air reconnaissance and agents' reports reveal that they are bringing up fresh troops.

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14 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 1, overcast, visibility 10 miles, sea 1, temperature 6° C.

Enemy Situation:

A tanker of 7,000 G.R.T. left Sevastopol in the morning and was spotted by air reconnaissance at 0940 45 miles south of Cape Sarich under escort by 2 destroyers. The returning minesweeper escort was also reported 30 miles south of Sevastopol, course north. At 0430 a bomber formation unsuccessfully attacked another escorted tanker off Novorossisk. Air reconnaissance reported an enemy submarine 100 miles south of Cape Khersonese, course 200°.

According to an Army observation, 1 vessel, probably a destroyer, 4 submarines, 1 destroyer and 1 submarine in dock are lying at Sevastopol.

Main Naval D/F Station reported livelier mine-sweeper and patrol activity off the east coast. Cruiser D is presumed to be in the sea area south or southeast of Sevastopol.

Own Situation:

Rumanian/Bulgarian Area:

Group 1, Danube Flotilla proceeded from Bugaz to Sulina to escort "Krimhild" from there to Bugaz. Group 2 checked the gap in the Ilichevka mine-field. No mines swept. The gap was buoyed 500 meters on either side.

Harbor Defense Flotilla, Odessa has searched the route from Odessa south to Bolshoi Fontan and buoyed the middle of the swept channel. Motor pinnace gear, 4-meter pendant, was used. No mines swept.

Tug "Amsel" put out from Constantza to lay buoys off St. George Arm.

Tug "Angara" put out from Nikolaiev for trials and to lay seamarks in the Bug.

Group Lex remained in harbor because of the weather.

Special Duties Detachment checked the northern entrance to Burgas Bay.

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Readiness:

"Delfinul" provisionally operational on 16 April.

Motor minesweeper FR 8 again operational.

Motor vessel "Rila" put out from Galatz for Turnu Severin.

"Alzei" and "Tronje" of Iron Gates Group, Danube Flotilla are in position in the Moldova area.

"Gernot" was off Orsova in the evening and will reach Belgrade on 15 April.

Admiral, Black Sea issued orders for the planned operation to bring steamers "Arkadia", "Salzburg" and "Prodromos" from Istanbul to Burgas.

During the preliminary preparations for the operation, we have been continually faced with the problem of the circuitous and time-wasting communications procedure between Sofia and the steamers lying in Istanbul harbor. The changeable weather, which is very difficult to forecast, makes it necessary to give very short notice of the executive order. With things as they are at present, it is hardly possible to take any account of the weather forecast.

Land Situation:

No fresh reports.

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15 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, overcast, visibility 20 km., sea 0,
temperature 6° C.

Enemy Situation:

The enemy continues to bring up transports between Novorossisk and the Kerch harbors at night. Air reconnaissance spotted one of these convoys in the morning, shortly before it put in to Novorossisk.

The enemy also has all their steamers proceeding in the eastern Black Sea protected by guardboats.

Main Naval D/F Station observed a submarine tender and a submarine off the northern part of the east coast. Cruiser D is presumed to be off the central part or in the southern Black Sea. A formation of 6 M.T.B.s is at sea in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

Supplementary report for 14 April: No mines were swept during the check sweep in the northern entrance to Burgas Bay.

15 April: More check sweeps in the northern entrance to the bay by the German Naval Special Duties Detachment and in the southern entrance by the Bulgarian minesweeping formation.

Results will be reported later.

Rumanian Area:

Check of the route from point 15 to CS 3 by gunboat "Dumitrescu" as preparation for the sailing of the 2 destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" from Constantza to the Bosphorus.

0830 Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" put out on a southerly course to pick up the two supply steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" and tanker "Prodromos".

Eight reconnaissance planes led by Air Commander, South reported no ships sighted in the western Black Sea. As there were no reports at all from the destroyers in the course of the evening, it

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can safely be assumed that the convoy was duly picked up off the Bosphorus.

Three motor minesweepers (FR) put out from Sulina to the north with "Brunhild" and tug "Forsch". They put in to Bugaz at 1640.

Five motor minesweepers (FR) checked the route from Bugaz as far as Otto 3. Report not yet received.

South Russian Area:

Naval ferry barge No. 130 of Group Lex sailed from Skadovsk to make a reconnaissance off the coast near Klarovka in preparation for the intended minelaying there against enemy landings.

Crimea:

No special incidents.

Land Situation:

According to the daily report from 11th Army H.Q., the day was quiet except for increasing artillery activity on both fronts during the afternoon.

(Signed) Fleischer.

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16 - 30 APRIL, 1942

PG/31509



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16 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 4, cloudy, visibility 20 km.,
sea 1, temperature 3° C.

Enemy Situation:

Morning air reconnaissance was flown by Air Commander, South for the "Arkadia", "Salzburg" and "Prodromos" convoy south and west of Sevastopol as far as 32° E. No enemy vessels were sighted.

In the early hours of the morning a convoy of 1 steamer of 1,500 G.R.T., 1 destroyer, 2 M.T.B.s and 1 guardboat put out from Novorossiisk, course west. This course seemed to indicate that their destination was Sevastopol. Two fighters accompanied the convoy as protection against German planes.

In the morning 2 motor minesweepers and 4 or 5 M.T.B.s and patrol boats were off Tuapse on alternating courses. One destroyer was sighted in the same area, course 120°, proceeding along the coast at high speed.

Main Naval D/F Station reported 8 submarines in the Crimean area and the area immediately west of it. This large number seems to indicate that the enemy thinks our convoys will soon be running to the northern ports and is taking appropriate steps.

In the morning Main Naval D/F Station also reported a formation consisting of 6 destroyers and another probable large vessel in the eastern to southeastern Black Sea, probable course west or northwest. In the afternoon Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South passed on an agent's report confirming this observation. The agent also reported that the formation had orders "to assemble in Ghelenjik on completion of operations".

Main Naval D/F Station further reported that C-in-C Fleet is at sea aboard an unidentified vessel, probably cruiser F, accompanied by 1 destroyer.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

Supplementary report for 15 April: During a

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check sweep by Special Duties Detachment in the northern entrance to Burgas Bay, one drifting mine was shot up. No mines were swept during the check sweep of the southern entrance by the Bulgarian minesweeping formation.

So far no report has been received about the check sweep by the Special Duties Detachment in the southern entrance to Varna Bay.

1100 Supply steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" and tanker "Prodromos" which sailed from the Bosphorus put in to Burgas. No particular incidents during the convoy operation.

Rumanian Area:

1130 Supplementary report for 15 April: Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" put in to Constantza after escorting steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg", and tanker "Prodromos".

Supplementary report for 15 April: The check sweep by 5 motor minesweepers (FR) of Group 2, Danube Flotilla as far as the Ilichevka minefield gap was without result. Similarly no mines were swept during the check sweep up to point Otto 3 and back to Bugaz.

1200 Commander, Danube Flotilla, motor minesweeper FR 7 and tug "Forsch" put out from Bugaz to check the Ilichevka minefield gap. They returned at 1700. Result not yet reported.

South Russian Area:

1100 Naval Port Commander, Odessa ordered increased readiness, probably on account of the previously mentioned Main Naval D/F Station report about a formation consisting of 6 destroyers and 1 probable large vessel.

1715 Increased readiness canceled.

This order for increased readiness seems to have been unnecessary.

Crimea:

No reports on special incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.

Iron Gates area: Tender "Gernot" and guard-boats "Alzei" and "Tronje" have resumed the check patrols to protect the Iron Gates.

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Rumanian Naval Command reports that they have also assigned 1 monitor and 2 guardboats to reinforce the protection of the Iron Gates.

Land Situation:

No special incidents in the area of 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

No daily report received from 11th Army H.Q.

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17 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 3, fair, visibility 20 km.,
sea 2, temperature 4° C.

Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon a bomber formation belonging to Air Commander, South sank a steamer of 2,500 G.R.T. in the central Black Sea. She was escorted by a destroyer. The steamer left Sevastopol in the early morning, at first steered south, then east. The Air Force shadowed her continuously on this easterly course.

Aerial photographs revealed the following ships in Sevastopol at 1530 on 16 April: 4 submarines, 2 destroyers, 2 minesweepers, 1 submarine and 1 destroyer, 1 passenger/freight ship (sunk in the afternoon - see above), 1 hulk, 2 floating cranes, 5 M.T.B.s, 18 coastal vessels and 25 launches and boats. Tanker lighters at the oil pier totaled 500 G.R.T.

Air reconnaissance observed an unprotected destroyer beached between Novorossisk and Ghelenjik. Probably she has already been abandoned.

Further reports give a picture of the traffic off the Turkish coast where there were only Turkish steamers. It was impossible however to make out the nationality of 1 steamer.

Main Naval D/F Station now suspects 9, instead of yesterday's 8, submarines in the western Black Sea and Crimean area. The cruiser reported yesterday with C-in-C Fleet on board seems to have returned to Batum.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No mines were swept during yesterday's and today's check sweeps by Special Duties Detachment in the northern entrance to Varna Bay.

0500

Tanker "Prodromos" which left Burgas at 2130 on 16 April under Bulgarian escort put in to Varna. At 2000 she left again for Constantza under Bulgarian escort.

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Rumanian Area:

0850 Gunboat "Chiculescu" on trials until 1255.
It was discovered that she had a leaking piston.

Naval ferry barge No. 134 transferred from
Varna to Constantza.

Commander, Danube Flotilla left Bugaz for
Ochakov with 8 motor minesweepers (FR), tug
"Forsch" and depot ship "Brunhild". They
checked route Green via point 25, Otto 2 to
Otto 3, then route Yellow to the entrance to
Beresanski channel with 8-meter sweep and
towed loop gear. No mines swept.

Danube Flotilla checked the route from Sulina
via Bugaz/Odessa to Ochakov for the first
time since the ice melted. It was found that,
contrary to expectation, although the enemy
most certainly knew about our supply route,
they had not laid any more mines there.

Iron Gates area: "Gernot" carried out a
check sweep from Moldova to Orsova, "Alzei"
from Bazias/Kolobat to Moldova and "Tronje"
from Moldova via the Kisiliovo Arm to Bazias.
No incidents.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No special incidents in area of the naval
shore commanders.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported increased enemy
reconnaissance activity on the Sevastopol front.
Otherwise no special incidents on either front.

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18 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, haze, visibility 10 km.,
sea 0, temperature 3° C.

Enemy Situation:

Both air reconnaissance and Main Naval D/F Station reports mention 2 single destroyers steering southeast out in the eastern Black Sea. Presumably they left Poti to salvage the steamer sunk on 17 April and are now returning.

After studying the aerial photograph, an agent of Naval Intelligence Bureau, Black Sea stated that the steamer must be motor vessel "Ostrovski" or "Chechov".

According to the situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, there is a minelayer and an M.T.B. tender with M.T.B.s in the Sevastopol area and southwest of the Crimea. Some submarines (number not given) are in the southwestern Black Sea. Off the northern part of the east coast and Kerch Peninsula there are from 8 to 10 M.T.B.s or motor minesweepers.

Cruiser F is off the central part of the east coast.

Results of visual reconnaissance of enemy harbors on the Sea of Azov:

Akhtari: 1 tanker of 800 G.R.T., 2 coastal vessels and 60 small boats.

Yeisk: 2 freighters, each 300 G.R.T., and 5 small boats.

Kuban estuary: 1 freighter of 200 G.R.T. and 4 small boats.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No minesweeping activity as boats and gear were being overhauled in Burgas and Varna.

0800 Naval ferry barges Nos. 126, 132 and 133 left Constantza for Varna.

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Rumanian Area:

- 0400- Torpedoboats "Smeul" and "Sborul" left
0500 Constantza to take over the escort of tanker
"Prodromos" which was proceeding from Varna
with the 2 Bulgarian E-boats.
- 0630 "Prodromos" put in to Constantza with her
escort.
- 1600 Naval ferry barges Nos. 126, 132 and 133 put
in to Constantza from Varna.
- 0700 Commander, Danube Flotilla with 4 motor
minesweepers (FR) and tug "Forsch" put out
for Odessa and back to check route Green.
- 1115 The vessels put in to Odessa and at 1215 put
out again for Bugaz where they arrived at
1715. No mines were swept on route Green.

As the first check sweep by Danube Flotilla
from Sulina to Ochakov has not revealed any
new minefields, the German and Rumanian
stations concerned were informed that the
convoy traffic will be resumed on 20 April.

South Russian Area:

Vessels commenced laying the FMB minefield in
the Sea of Azov off Genichesk.

Crimea:

Theodosia was bombed during the night until
0330. Reports on damage not yet received.

Iron Gates area: "Tronje" checked the stretch
between Bazias and Moldova. No incidents.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported no special incidents
apart from lively activity of the enemy Air
Force on the eastern front. Several bombing
attacks on railroad stations and other
installations. The stretch of railroad to
Genichesk is cut for the present.

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19 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, overcast, fog, visibility 100 meters, sea 0, temperature 0° C.

Enemy Situation:

Off the northern part of the east coast only small vessels were identified except for one steamer of 3,000 G.R.T. at 1200 in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. The steamer had 2 escorts. Course not reported. If this report is correct, this is the first observed attempt to send out transports during the day.

Aerial photographs of Sevastopol show that the destroyers identified on 16 and 17 April are no longer there. The number of submarines, M.T.B.s and minesweepers is approximately the same. An aerial photograph shows 2 freighters of 7,000 G.R.T. and 5,000 G.R.T. respectively with 7 submarines and 2 M.T.B.s in Ochamchiri. This month we have had only one other air reconnaissance report on this harbor: 7 boats and 2 small merchant ships on 11 April.

The Air Force spotted 1 submarine 14 miles west of Eupatoria. Submarines have not been sighted in this area before.

Situation report from Main Naval D/F Station: 1 minelayer with 2 gunboats in the Sevastopol area, 7 submarines in the western to central Black Sea and 3 destroyers in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

1000 No minesweeping activity off Varna. Quiet.

Naval ferry barge No. 137 put out from Varna for Constantza. At 1715 she put in to Constantza.

Rumanian Area:

0850 Gunboat "Dumitrescu" put out from Constantza for Sulina where she arrived at 1630.

0700 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz with 4 motor minesweepers (FR) and tug "Forsch" to check the route to Ochakov and mark out routes Green and Yellow.

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1730 Commander, Danube Flotilla put in to Ochakov-North. No special incidents.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported from Genichesk that at the start of the laying of the last minefield a mine detonated on hitting the water, at the same time exploding 2 more mines lying on the deck of the 2 fishing trawlers used for the actual laying. Both trawlers were destroyed. Three officers and 19 men were killed and 2 officers and 4 men wounded. Supplementary report follows.

It was reported from Yalta that 1 FMB mine exploded at the western end of the minefield during the night of 18/19 April. Cause unknown.

1300 I arrived by plane in Simferopol with Naval Shore Commander, Crimea who was in Bucharest for a conference on 17 and 18 April. I plan to visit Eupatoria in the afternoon and go to Yalta on 20 April.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported no large-scale actions. No report from 11th Army H.Q.

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20 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, almost entirely overcast, visibility 20 km., sea 0, temperature 7° C.

From the recent massing of vessels on the east coast of the Sea of Azov, Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine thinks that an enemy raid on the north coast is likely in the near future. The enemy must have assembled small craft of various types up to 300 G.R.T. from the Caucasus coast. Minelayers, minesweepers and motor minesweepers were also detected.

At 1350 on 19 April, air reconnaissance sighted a freighter of 1,000 G.R.T. - i.e. a fairly large vessel for the Sea of Azov - off Yeisk, course west. At 0924 on the same day, a coastal radio station mentioned a position in a message which tallies with the steering points for the sea channel to Yeisk. There is probably a connection between the two messages.

At 0723 a bomber formation sighted a destroyer obviously making for Sevastopol. A submarine dived on the appearance of a German reconnaissance plane 60 miles southwest of Sevastopol.

Enemy shipping in port: According to visual reconnaissance the main body of the Russian Fleet is lying in the southeastern harbors.

Batum: The battleship, 4 cruisers, 4 destroyers and 2 tankers.

Poti: 1 cruiser, 3 destroyers and 4 submarines, also 1 cruiser and 1 destroyer in floating dock.

According to aerial photographs, the merchant shipping tonnage in Novorossisk has sunk from 65,000 G.R.T. to 55,000 G.R.T. between 11 and 20 April. Two destroyers have put in to Sevastopol between 19 and 20 April. There are medium and small craft in Taman roads in Kerch Strait, but not a great deal of shipping in Kamish Burun, the enemy's main supply harbor.

According to the situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, there is 1 destroyer in the Crimean area with C-in-C Fleet on board. Otherwise nothing of importance.

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Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

Transport of supplies by sea will begin again in accordance with Admiral, Black Sea Ckdos. 793 of 20 March (see War Diary 21 March). For this purpose, Danube Flotilla will be assigned to Naval Special Duties Detachment to whom I have entrusted the execution of this task.

- 0615 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Ochakov-North, course west, with 8 motor minesweepers (FR), steamer "Zar Ferdinand" and motor vessels "Kolosvar" and "Kassa". At 0915 the convoy passed Odessa.
- 1040 Gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" left Sulina for the north to take over the convoy from Danube Flotilla at the rendezvous point about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Bugaz.
- 1450 The convoy passed Bugaz.
- 1615 The above-mentioned Rumanian warships took over the convoy and proceeded to Sulina.
- 1720 Commander, Danube Flotilla put in to Bugaz with the 8 motor minesweepers (FR). He reported that the convoy proceeded without incident and according to plan. In $46^{\circ} 10' N$, $30^{\circ} 40' E$ in 14 meters of water the sweeps of 2 of the boats hooked on to an underwater obstacle - probably a wreck.
- 2400 The 3 supply steamers arrived in Sulina roads, "Zar Ferdinand" anchored there, guarded by 4 boats of the Rumanian Danube Division. The 2 Hungarian motor vessels, gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" put in to Sulina.
- 0200 Steamers "Danubius" and "Oituz" and tanker "Le Progres" put out from Constantza for the north escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Maresti".
- 1600 Steamer "Sulina" put out for the north escorted by destroyer "Marasesti".

The plan is that the convoy of 4 supply steamers in all will be taken over by a group of the Danube Flotilla at about 0600 on 21 April at the rendezvous point $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Bugaz and proceed to Ochakov.

South Russian Area:

- 1320- Five boats of Harbor Defense Flotilla, Odessa
1740 carried out check sweeps in Odessa Bay.

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Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported that supply traffic has begun from Mariupol to the more easterly harbors on the north coast of the Sea of Azov - Krivaya Kossa and Taganrog - provisionally with 7 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and one 100-ton lighter. They are carrying fuel, ammunition, food, urgent military supplies and field mail; on return passage they bring grain, goods in short supply such as ores, etc.

I inspected Yalta and then returned to Simferopol.

On instructions from Commanding Admiral, Black Sea, Commander (Ordnance) Jung, Mines and Barrage Officer of Group Command, South, who is on a duty trip to the Crimea, proceeded to Genichesk to investigate and report on the mine accident - see War Diary 19 April.

According to a report from Naval Harbor Master, Genichesk, casualties were as follows:

Dead:	1 German officer - Lieutenant (Ordnance) Barz	
	2 officers)
	7 warrant officers) Croats.
	3 petty officers)
	10 men)

Severely wounded: 1 warrant officer - Croat.

Slightly wounded:	2 officers)
	1 warrant officer)
	1 petty officer) Croats.
	1 sailor)

Six men were rescued unhurt. Further report to follow.

No other incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.

Iron Gates area: "Alzei" carried out a check sweep without incident. "Cernot" is at readiness in Orsova and "Tronje" in Brencova.

Land Situation:

The daily reports from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. and 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) do not mention any special incidents.

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21 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SE winds, force 3, almost entirely overcast, visibility 10 km., sea 1, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

At 1911 Main Naval D/F Station located cruiser A 65 miles southwest of Sevastopol. Air Commander, South thinks it hardly probable that there is a cruiser in this area, since aerial photographs taken between 1100 and 1500 show that all the cruisers were in Poti, Batum or Tuapse.

The battleship has moved from Batum to Poti and cruiser "Komintern" from Novorossisk to Tuapse (aerial photograph).

At noon Main Naval D/F Station located a minelayer in the sea area about 70 miles south of Theodosia, at 2201 an unidentified unit.

Air Commander, South reported that according to aerial photographs the following enemy forces are operational: 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, 1 flotilla leader, 1 large destroyer, 11 destroyers, 5 torpedo-boats, 29 submarines and several motor minesweepers and M.T.B.s.

This report corresponds with my general impression of the dislocation of forces.

According to aerial photographs, the number of submarines in Sevastopol is the same as on 16 April. Severe damage noticed aboard several steamers in the harbors. Otherwise vessels are unchanged.

From Main Naval D/F Station situation report: 1 submarine in the Sevastopol/Crimean coast area, 2 submarines in the central Black Sea. C-in-C Fleet has been at sea since the evening of 20 April.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

The taking-over of supply ships "Sulina", "Oituz", "Danubius" and "Le Progres", planned for 0600 off Bugaz, has been postponed a few hours as Danube Flotilla cannot put out from Bugaz owing to fog.

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When visibility improved Group 2, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz with tug "Forsch" and took over the convoy from the Rumanian naval forces. They proceeded north without incident. At dusk the convoy anchored in Trutaieva Bay 10 miles west of Ochakov.

2000

The Hungarian motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" put out from Sulina for the north escorted by gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedo-boat "Smeul".

Danube Flotilla will take them over tomorrow morning at 0600 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Bugaz and they will then go on to Ochakov.

Bulgarian Area:

Check sweeps in the southern and northern entrances to Varna Bay. No mines swept.

Rumanian/South Russian Area:

Apart from escort assignments no particular incidents.

Crimea:

I held an inspection at Theodosia with the Naval Shore Commander and then flew back to Nikolaiev.

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported from Genichesk that the FMB mines remaining on the 2 fishing vessels wrecked in the mine accident - see War Diary 19 April - were detonated at night and have now disappeared underwater.

Iron Gates area: Check sweeps by "Gornot" and "Alzei". No incidents.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported considerable activity by enemy artillery in the area of 54th Army Corps and in addition increased enemy air activity with bombing attacks on Simferopol, Scall, Kovo and the airfield at Sarabus.

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported successful attacks by our dive-bombers on enemy positions in front of the Taganrog bridgehead, otherwise apart from successful attacks by assault troops no particular incidents.

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22 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S winds, force 1, almost entirely overcast, fog, visibility 500 meters, sea 1, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 2 submarine locations in the central Black Sea. Their report of M.T.B.s in the Batum area was confirmed by air reconnaissance.

A merchant ship was observed in Kerch Strait, tonnage not reported. No reports so far on the effect of aerial mines in Kerch Strait.

No reports on enemy shipping in Novorossisk and Tuapse yet received. According to aerial photographs the merchant shipping in Poti and Batum has decreased between 20 and 22 April.

"Minelayers" are frequently mentioned in the situation reports from Main Naval D/F-Station. One is reported in the Sevastopol area and one off Kerch Peninsula.

Own Situation:

The escort assignments were carried out according to plan.

1. Supply steamers "Oituz", "Sulina" and "Danubius" with Group 2, Danube Flotilla and tug "Forsch" arrived at Ochakov-North at 0740. The motor minesweepers (FR) put in to port. Tug "Forsch" was detached to Bugaz where she put in at 1300, the supply vessels went on to Nikolaiev, the "Danubius" to Kherson.
2. The 2 motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" which put out yesterday were picked up at 0600 by Commander, Danube Flotilla with Group 1 and escorted to Ochakov-North where they put in at 1445. The motor minesweepers (FR) put in to harbor, the 2 motor vessels went on to Nikolaiev.
3. "Zar Ferdinand", which left Sulina roads at 1700 yesterday for the south under escort by 3 destroyers, put in to Constantza at 0320.

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It is pleasing to record the success of the escort forces and Danube Flotilla in that these first convoy assignments were carried out without incident.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

- 0700 "Romulus" and motor minesweeper FR 10 put out from Constantza for Bugaz.
- 0710 Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 left Sulina for Bugaz.
- 1400 These 4 vessels arrived at Bugaz.
- 1815 Air attack on Sulina by 2 Russian bombers, type DB 3. Altitude 3,000 meters, cloud 5. They flew in from the north and withdrew to the east. Twelve bombs landed on the harbor and a Rumanian battery. One man was killed. No material damage.

South Russian Area:

- 1630 Naval ferry barges Nos. 130 and 139 put out from Skadovsk for Constantza. They are to approach the coast near Bugaz at dawn and then proceed further south.
- 0800 I flew from Nikolaiev to Mariupol with Naval Shore Commander to confer with 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) and inspect the harbor and docks at Mariupol. Returned to Nikolaiev in the evening.

North coast of the Sea of Azov: Supply traffic between Mariupol and Krivaya Kossa proceeded in both directions without enemy interference.

General:

Following the report from Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine - see War Diary 20 April - that the enemy may possibly be planning a landing against the north coast of the Sea of Azov, Group Command, South has issued orders that a minefield is to be laid as soon as possible to protect the Gulf of Taganrog against enemy surface forces.

Group Command is planning to lay an FMC minefield between Byelosaraika and Kossa Dolgaya with anti-sweeping devices. I have already discussed this question with Naval Shore Commander Ukraine in Bucharest on 16 April. Apart from

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this, he intends to lay FMB minefields off Berdyansk, off the "old fortress" at Petrevskaya Krepos and near Mariupol.

Crimca:

No special incidents reported.

General:

Until Commander (Ordnance) Jung has discovered the cause of the mine accident at Genichesk - see War Diary 20 April - Group Command, South has forbidden further use of FMB mines (see Gkdos. 2211 of 22 April). The stations concerned will receive this order direct from Group Command, South.

Readiness:

Bulgarian torpedoboat "Dersky" operational.

Land Situation:

1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported a successful raid by assault troops. 11th Army H.Q. reported more lively infantry activity on the eastern front. An enemy reconnaissance sortie by perhaps 1 regiment was repulsed by artillery fire.

Slight enemy air activity. Bombing raids on Djanko and the airfield at Sarabus.

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23 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

S.E winds, force 2, almost entirely overcast, rain, visibility 10 km., sea 1, temperature 6° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air Commander, South reported on aerial photographs as follows:

Astrakhan: 2 storage tanks and an oil refinery, 9 paddle-steamers, 1 barge of about 100 meters, 15 barges from 75 - 100 meters and some small barges and boats on the Volga; 4 minelayers, 2 vessels (probably submarines), 6 paddle-steamers and a considerable number of medium and small barges in the shipyard; 15 river barges, about 15 paddle-steamers and many small boats 6 km. south of the town on the Volga; oil refineries 13 km. south of the town.

According to visual reconnaissance, there were 7 tugs moving upstream and 3 tugs downstream on the canal between Astrakhan and Rynock. At the anchorage 60 km. south of Rynock 3 freighters, each about 2,000 G.R.T., and 15 launches.

Between Rynock and Makhach Kala 10 freighters, each 1,500 G.R.T., and 70 launches were at sea. In Makhach Kala harbor 1 tanker of 5,000 G.R.T. and 15 freighters, each about 1,000 G.R.T., and several boats were detected.

The general impression is one of lively movement of transport vessels. So far we have no knowledge of the presence of submarines in the Caspian Sea and this observation will have to be confirmed.

According to an aerial photograph, the training cruiser "Kommintern" is in Batum; she was still in Tuapse on 21 April. The aerial photograph of Batum, visual observation at sea and a report from Main Naval D/F Station confirm that a large destroyer is moving north from Batum. According to an aerial photograph, a submarine has put in to Sevastopol.

From the situation report of Main Naval D/F Station it is clear that the main center of activity of minesweepers and small craft is off the northern part of the east coast.

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Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

- 0805 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Ochakov-North with Group 1, Danube Flotilla to escort steamer "Carpati" to Bugaz.
- 1155 Gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" put out from Sulina northwards to take over the escort of the "Carpati". They met her at 1800.
- 1900 Group 1, Danube Flotilla put in to Bugaz. No special incidents during passage from Ochakov.
- 1920 Torpedoboat "Smeul" had to return to port because of a sudden deterioration in the weather not reported by the coastal meteorological stations. Steamer "Carpati" went on to Constantza escorted by gunboat "Dumitrescu".

Bulgarian Area:

- Minesweeping in the northern and southern entrances to Varna Bay was without result. Three Bulgarian E-boats proceeded from Varna to Burgas to escort steamers "Salzburg" and "Arkadia" to Varna.
- 2345 The 2 supply steamers put out from Burgas for Varna escorted by the 3 Bulgarian E-boats.

Rumanian Area:

- 0105 The minesweeping group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla (temporarily 7 naval ferry barges) put out to the north to clear the Russian minefield off St. George Arm. As minesweeping was impossible owing to the deterioration in the weather, the naval ferry barges put in to Sulina at 1845.
- 0610 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put out from Constantza for Bugaz.
- 2040 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put in to Sulina. She plans to go on to Bugaz tomorrow at 0600. The 2 naval ferry barges Nos. 130 and 139 which left Skadovsk yesterday at 1630 for Constantza reached the coast without incident. At 1100 they took refuge in Gibrnici Bay - north of Kilia Arm - because of the weather.

South Russian Area:

Supplementary report for 22 April: A medium tug in the coaling harbor at Odessa struck a

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mine while proceeding over a much frequented part of the harbor 40 meters from the quay. It was probably a ground mine, lying at a spot which is inaccessible for the mine-sweeping planes which have been operating there. The mine went off about 10 meters astern of the tug which sprang a leak. Attempts to get her to the pier were unsuccessful, but it may be possible to salvage her.

Casualties: 2 German officers slightly wounded.

I conferred with Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine at Nikolaiev. Tomorrow I plan to hold an inspection at Ochakov and then to fly back via Odessa to Bucharest.

Crimea:

Minesweeping in and off Ak Mechet harbor was without result. Naval Shore Commander does not mention what type of vessel was used. Probably they were small craft with improvised gear.

1120 Air attack on Eupatoria, 11 bombs on railroad station. Three FMB mines stored there were damaged, otherwise no damage to military installations.

From Genichesk, Commander (Ordnance) Jung of Group Command, South who was in charge of the investigations into the cause of the mine explosion - see War Diary 19 and 20 April - sent the following preliminary report by radiogram 2334/21/25:

Investigation of mine explosion at Genichesk completed. Written report follows. Results:

1. Shell and anchor separated because of a soft soluble plug.
2. The oil piston ran too easily into the recoil cylinder, oil dripped on to the electric disc, and it immediately became live.
3. The mines were wrongly placed in the rails - i.e. with their lead horns to the front, probably these got bent.

General conclusion: Several safety devices unfortunately failed at the same time.

Iron Cates area: Check sweeps without incident.

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Readiness:

U-boat "Delphinul" operational.

Mine-exploding vessel No. 101 operational.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q.
(Tanks) reported no special incidents from
the front. Transportation of supplies to
and from Mariupol continues without
incident.

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24 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SE winds, force 2, entirely overcast,
visibility 15 km., sea 2, temperature 10° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to aerial photographs there were not many vessels in Kerch and Kamish Burun (incomplete view owing to cloud).

Yeisk: 1 "small ship", 3 paddle-steamers, each about 150 G.R.T., and 30 boats.

Akhtari: 3 "small ships" totaling about 500 G.R.T., and 50 boats.

In the opinion of the expert on enemy situation reports on the staff of Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine - a former Russian naval officer - enemy boats in the Sea of Azov are so well camouflaged that they are not recognizable from the air. There are probably large numbers of boats there, which have been gradually brought down from the northern Caucasus harbors. Hence we must deduce plans to attack the north coast of the Sea of Azov with the aim of cutting off 1st Army (Tanks). According to a situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, the main center of mine-sweeping and patrol activity is in the Kerch area and off the northern part of the east coast. Some submarines were reported in the western to central Black Sea. Cruiser A proceeded north with a flotilla leader in the southeastern Black Sea during the night of 23/24 April.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

0600 Check sweep in the northern entrance to Varna Bay. No mines swept.

Steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" put in to Varna from Burgas escorted by 3 Bulgarian E-boats and 2 torpedoboats. No incidents during passage.

Rumanian Area:

0125 Destroyer "Maresti" put out from Constantza to the north to take over the escort of steamer "Carpati" from gunboat "Dumitrescu" which put in to Sulina at 0922.

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1900 Steamer "Carpati" and destroyer "Marosti" put in to Constantza.

The 2 naval ferry barges Nos. 130 and 139 which left Skadovsk and anchored in Gibrieni Bay on account of the weather had to weigh anchor when the east wind increased. They made for Sulina where they put in at 1730.

Group 1, Danube Flotilla - 4 motor minesweepers (FR) - transferred from Ochakov to Bugaz. Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 transferred from Sulina to Bugaz.

Both groups of Danube Flotilla are now lying at anchor in Bugaz ready for the next escort assignments. Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 is to proceed to Odessa to check the whole harbor area for magnetic mines.

South Russian Area:

0730 I flew from Nikolaiev to inspect the harbor at Ochakov and confer with the staff at the naval station there, then flew on from Odessa to Bucharest where I arrived at 1630.

For report on my tour of inspection in the South Russian area and the Crimea, see Appendix.

Crimea:

1034 Several bombing attacks on Eupatoria. No damage reported.

1145 Air attack on Genichesk. One Croat was severely wounded, but no material damage was reported.

The following report has been received from Commander (Ordnance) Jung about the causes of the mine accident - radiogram 2251/23/25:

"It has been proved that the disaster was caused as follows:

- a. Shell and anchor separated as a result of a material flaw due to soft soluble plug and abnormal strain on pliers because of wrong placing in the rails.
- b. The immediate activation can only be put down to insufficient filling of the recoil cylinder.
- c. No adequate explanation for the immediate cause - the bending of the load horns.

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- d. The detonation of the other 2 mines, which were placed ready for laying, was caused because the boats were proceeding slowly, the mines had short mooring ropes and by reason of the construction of the FME mine the fuses became active."

Detailed written report on the investigation will be given separately.

General:

11th Army H.Q. is planning a surprise landing on the north coast of Kerch Peninsula east of Ak Mona for the purpose of wiping out a Russian staff. They inquired from Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine if the necessary motor fishing vessels could be made available from Genichesk. Owing to damage etc., there are at the moment only 5 motor fishing vessels operational at Genichesk and additional vessels would have to be made available from Berdyansk and Mariupol. In his reply Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine pointed out that 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) have priority for use of the fishing vessels and that these are not suitably equipped for a landing.

In my comments contained in radiogram Gkdos. 80 Chofs., I pointed out to Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea and Ukraine and Naval Liaison Officers to 11th Army H.Q. and 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) that I share the misgivings of Naval Shore Commander, Crimea and that the question of whether 1st Army or 11th Army H.Q. more urgently requires the motor fishing vessels must be left to the decision of Army Group South.

Iron Gates area: Check sweep by guardboat "Tronje" without incident.

Readiness:

Torpedoboat "Smeul" will be non-operational for about 3 days on account of salt water in her boilers.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported that the day passed quietly on both fronts.

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25 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 1, overcast, visibility 10 miles,
sea 0^o, temperature 10^o C.

Enemy Situation:

Enemy activity slight in the whole sea area.

At about 0900 Main Naval D/P Station detected
a submarine several times off Theodosia and
another 20 miles south of Novorossisk.

1700

Main Naval D/P Station reported the following
vessels in the Sevastopol area: 2 minelayers,
1 gunboat and some small craft. Off the
Crimea and in the central Black Sea there were
2 destroyers with C-in-C on board while the
submarine was confirmed off Theodosia. Off
Kerch and in the Sea of Azov 3 minelayers,
1 gunboat, 4 minesweepers, 4 M.T.B.s and
some guardboats were detected and 1 destroyer,
1 depot ship with 16 small craft (M.T.B.s or
motor minesweepers) and 1 minesweeper were
intercepted off the northern part of the east
coast. Off the southern part were 2 submarines
and 1 destroyer.

Novorossisk at 0900 (aerial photograph):
1 heavy cruiser of the "Kirov" class and
about 62,000 tons of merchant shipping - an
increase.

Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South
sent a radiogram reporting that according to
statements from deserters supply traffic for
Sevastopol proceeds from Poti along the
Turkish coast without showing a flag; if air
attack seems imminent they show the Turkish
flag. They approach Sevastopol from the south-
west.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

Check sweep in the northern entrance to Varna
Bay was without incident.

2200

Steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" sailed for
Constantza escorted by 3 Bulgarian E-boats.

Rumanian Area:

0610

The 2 naval ferry barges Nos. 130 and 139
which come from Skadovsk sailed from Sulina

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for Constantza where they put in at 1445.

The minesweeping group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla - 7 naval ferry barges - swept the area off St. George Arm.

South Russian Area and Crimea:

No special incidents in the area of the naval shore commanders.

Iron Gates area: The 3 guardboats "Gernot", "Tronje" and "Alzei" are operational. No incidents reported.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. and 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) had no incidents to report.

General:

1. I had a conference in Bucharest with Commander Mimbelli, C-in-C, Italian Black Sea Command on the subject of operations by the midget submarines and special vessels which the Italian Naval Command plan to send to the Black Sea. They include:
 - a. 6 midget submarines - 35 tons, crew of four - which will arrive by rail in Constantza at the end of the month.
 - b. 4 Italian E-boats - 25 tons, crew of 13 - which will be brought by water to Galatz, towed from there to Sulina and go on under their own power to Constantza.
 - c. 10 special vessels - crew of 2 - which will leave Italy at the end of April.

For the present Constantza will probably be the base for the 6 midget submarines and 4 E-boats. The 10 special vessels with their low radius of action and poor endurance must have a base very close to their operational area. It was therefore decided that the boats previously scheduled to arrive in Galatz should now be taken to Simferopol. Following his inspection of Constantza, fixed for tomorrow, and the subsequent conference here, Commander Mimbelli will fly as soon as possible to the Crimea to inspect various possible bases, primarily Yalta. As the E-boats must also be kept as close to their operational area as possible and it will therefore be essential to transfer them to the Crimea very soon, Commander Mimbelli will also visit Skadovsk, Ak Mochet, Dzhariulgach and Theodosia.

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Admiral, Black Sea will direct the operations of the Italian boats and his operational staff will move first to Constantza and later to the Crimea.

2. U-boat "Delfinul" is again operational. At my request Naval Special Duties Detachment submitted a draft operational order for her. They had previously decided on an operational area north of Cape Kerempok Burnu to Cape Bafra Burnu bounded by latitude 43° N. The aim was to harass the supply traffic recently observed proceeding from southeastern Black Sea harbors along the Turkish coast to Sevastopol. This supply traffic is not strongly escorted and after her long period in dock I deliberately wanted to give the U-boat a comparatively easy task. However, Rumanian Naval Command rejected my suggestion and, in spite of my warning that there would be more risk for the U-boat in the area which they chose, decided to send her against the Russian supply traffic between Novorossisk/Anapa and Kerch Strait.

The original decision was that at the end of a very protracted period in dock the U-boat should put out on operations as soon as possible, but now Admiral Giurgescu, C-in-C Rumanian Navy, has decided that she must have a further 14-day training period before she can be considered operational.

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26 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 3 increasing to 5,
threatening to become even stronger,
cloudy to overcast, showers, visibility
10 miles.

Enemy Situation:

Enemy naval forces were more active during
the night of 25/26 April than has recently
been the case. Later reports from Main
Naval D/F Station, the reconnaissance report
from 4th Air Force and a report received from
Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South
tally to reveal the presence of a cruiser -
A - and about 3 destroyers in the area off
Sevastopol and a destroyer with C-in-C on
board in the central Black Sea. The formation
has obviously brought a supply vessel to
Sevastopol. This ship must have slipped
over from the Turkish coast unobserved.

Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander
further reported that 2 medium freighters,
each 4,000 - 5,000 tons, with Turkish markings
are near the limit of territorial waters off
Cape Ince Burun.

A request for information has been sent via
Naval Group South to Naval Attache, Istanbul.
There are suspicions that the Russians are
abusing the Turkish flag and Turkish territorial
waters.

Many coastal vessels were sighted in and off
Primorsko Akhtari and Feisk, but no enemy
shipping traffic was observed in the Sea of
Azov.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

- 0700 The 2 steamers from Varna, "Salzburg" and
"Arkadia", which were met off Tuzla and
escorted by the Rumanian destroyer "Marasesti"
and the E-boat "Viscolul" put in to Constantza.
- 0800 Steamers "Ardeal" and "Suceava" put out to the
north escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and
"Marasesti". The convoy will be taken over
by Danube Flotilla at 0600 on 27 April off
Bugaz and will then proceed to Ochakov.

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Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0510 A Sea Transportation group of 4 naval ferry barges carrying coal sailed from Constantza to Sulina where they put in at 1600. They are scheduled to proceed to Odessa on 27 April. After that they will only be used for shuttle service between Odessa and Khorsen for Chief Quartermaster, Black Sea.

Five naval ferry barges of 1st Special Duties Flotilla put out from Sulina to sweep the Russian minefield off St. George Arm. No mines swept.

1530 Naval ferry barge No. 121 sailed from Sulina for Varna for repairs to her center engine.

Commander, Danube Flotilla left Bugaz with Group 1 for Ochakov to bring the return convoy scheduled for 27/28 April to Constantza. The convoy includes motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" and steamers "Danubius" and "Le Progres".

Group 2, Danube Flotilla sailed from Bugaz for the north with tug "Forsch". On passage they are to lay buoys to mark out the supply route.

Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 sailed for Odessa to check the harbor area for magnetic mines - see War Diary 24 April.

South Russian Area:

No special incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea forwarded a Rumanian report that 15 enemy motor and rowing boats attempted a landing on the island of Biriuchi off Genichesk, but were forced off by the Rumanian garrison. A later report from Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South claims that no landings were detected. The only indications of enemy activity were between 8 and 10 fishing boats, each with a crew of 2 or 3, on the northwest shore of the island. It is possible that the "landing attempt" was nothing more than harmless fishing.

CONFIDENTIAL

General:

Subject: FMB mines. Following receipt of the report from Commander (Ordnance) Jung about the causes of the mine disaster - see War Diary 19 April - I have inquired from Group Command, South whether the order prohibiting further laying of FMB mines, issued on 22 April, can now be revoked. In employing this mine, the following safety precautions must be taken:

1. Good soluble plugs to be used.
2. Oil pistons to be filled.
3. FMB mines to be correctly placed in the rails.

Group Command, South has informed the stations concerned that FMB mines may now be laid again, subject to the observance of the above-mentioned safety measures.

Iron Gates area: Guardboat "Lilzci" carried out a check sweep between Bazias and Meldeva. No incidents.

Situation:

The imminent arrival of Italian naval forces and later of a German E-boat flotilla makes it essential to transfer a small operational staff of Admiral, Black Sea to Constantza immediately, later to the Crimea or Nikolaiev.

Radiogram Gkdas. 1326 contained the following instructions for Naval Shore Commanders, Crimea and Ukraine:

1. To prepare an operations H.Q. for a staff of about 6 officers and 20 warrant officers and men in Simferopol or Nikolaiev.
2. To prepare berths for 4 Italian E-boats and billets for about 70 men in Skadovsk.
3. To prepare Ak Kochet and Dzhariulgach as operational bases. Information on mine situation there is urgently required.
4. Malta and Theodosia are also to be regarded as operational bases.
5. Landing fields for Storch planes to be surveyed in Skadovsk, Charly, Ak Kochet, Dzhariulgach, Eupatoria and Genichesk.

CONFIDENTIAL

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported lively enemy activity and digging-in on the eastern front. Apart from some successful raids by our assault troops and 2 weak enemy raids which we repulsed, no special incidents to report from 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

CONFIDENTIAL

27 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

E winds, force 1, overcast, visibility
10 miles, sea 0, temperature 10° C.

Enemy Situation:

The situation report from Main Naval D/F Station seems to indicate that the enemy is planning an M.T.B. attack from Sevastopol.

There was an M.T.B. depot ship off the northern part of the east coast on 25 April and another depot ship is now reported in the Sevastopol area. Even if this is not the same vessel, we have evidence that the M.T.B.s have moved westwards. Presumably the depot ship goes on ahead to the operational harbor to await the arrival of the M.T.B.s. Twelve boats were observed by the D/F station in Kerch Strait.

I pointed these facts out to Naval Special Duties Detachment, Constantza.

There are 4 submarines in the Crimean area and the western Black Sea. The flotilla command is in Batum. Cruiser A is proceeding from the northern part of the east coast into the southeastern Black Sea with 4 destroyers. One destroyer was accurately located in this area and cruiser D was also discovered there with a destroyer in the afternoon.

Between 1500 and 1600, Main Naval D/F Station intercepted planes off the south coast of the Crimea.

Two submarines were located off Novorossisk and about 45 miles southsoutheast of Theodosia.

Aerial photographs show a medium freighter of 4,000 G.R.T. in Sevastopol. Smoke floats at the harbor entrance. The air reconnaissance planes detailed by Air Commander, South for our escort assignments discovered a steamer with Turkish neutrality markings in territorial waters off the Turkish coast.

It is possible that the enemy is bringing some supply traffic to Sevastopol through Turkish territorial waters under the guise of neutral markings. We may have to get U-boat "Delfinul" to hold up and examine one of these steamers as a test case.

CONFIDENTIAL

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

1. Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" which have been escorting steamers "Ardeal" and "Suceava" northward from Constantza since 0800 yesterday surprised an enemy submarine pre-flooded 17 miles south of Bugaz. They immediately attacked with guns and 50 depth charges. Range on sighting about 3 miles. Result could not be observed.

The convoy was duly taken over off Bugaz by Group 2, Danube Flotilla. No further incidents.

1620 The convoy arrived off Ochakov. Steamers "Ardeal" and "Suceava" went on to Nikolaiev.

0700 2. Commander, Danube Flotilla left Ochakov with Group 1 to escort the steamers "Tisza", "Budapest" and "Danubius" and tanker "Le Progres" via Bugaz-Sulina to Constantza.

The escort assignment was carried out according to plan. At about 1800 gunboat "Dumitrescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" took over as anti-mine escort and brought the steamers to Sulina.

2200 The convoy entered Sulina roads. Motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" and steamer "Danubius" continued to Braila. Gunboat "Dumitrescu" put in to Sulina and torpedoboat "Smeul" escorted tanker "Le Progres" to Constantza.

Bulgarian Area:

0250 Naval ferry barge No. 121 put in to Varna from Sulina to have her center engine repaired.

Rumanian Area:

0914 Submarine warning at Constantza from "Delfinul" which was engaged on trials and exercises inside the protective barrage. Anti-submarine measures initiated immediately by 5 defense vessels and 1 plane were without result.

1535 After completing their escort assignment for steamers "Ardeal" and "Suceava", destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" returned to Constantza.

Naval ferry barges Nos. 130, 132 and 139, which are to bring 50 UMA mines, 200 explosive floats and fuel, sweeping gear, food etc. to Skadovsk for Group Lox are reported ready to sail on 28 April.

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I have given the commander of the group orders that, provided the weather is favorable, he is to sail at dawn close to the coast, proceeding north on the supply route until dusk, then at the latitude of Bugaz make for Karkinitzki Bay on an easterly course. If the weather deteriorates, he is to make for Sulina or Bugaz as a port of refuge.

Five naval ferry barges of 1st Special Duties Flotilla checked the area off St. George Arm for mines without result.

In the transshipment harbor at Odessa mine-exploding vessel No. 191 detonated a magnetic mine about 30 meters abeam of the tug sunk after striking a mine on 22 April. The mine went off about 25 meters ahead of No. 191's bows; she was not damaged.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No incidents reported from the area of Naval Shore Commander.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported slight nuisance artillery fire and activity by assault troops on both fronts. The island of Biriuchi off Genichesk, where according to a Rumanian report the enemy attempted a landing during the night of 25/26 April, is now reported clear of the enemy.

Readiness:

Naval ferry barge No. 121 non-operational for repairs to her center engine. Duration of repairs will be reported later.

Motor minesweeper FR 8 non-operational until 28 April owing to engine failure.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 4, overcast, rain, visibility
6 miles, sea 3, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance during the forenoon observed
3 M.T.B.s between Novorossisk and Kerch proceeding
northwest. At noon 3 more M.T.B.s were making
for Novorossisk.

According to a report from the Radio Intercept
Service, cruiser A was in the central Black
Sea at noon with 2 destroyers. Apparently
she is returning to the northwest.

A flotilla leader is in the northeastern
Black Sea. From the situation report of
Main Naval D/F Station there does not seem to
be any particular center of patrol and mine-
sweeper activity. The number of vessels
engaged in these tasks off the Crimean coast
and in the Kerch area is unaltered.

C-in-C, Fleet is still in Batum or in the
Batum area.

According to an aerial photograph the amount
of shipping at operational readiness in
Novorossisk has decreased from 60,000 to
40,000 G.R.T. The missing ships have not
so far been intercepted.

For the first time a "paddle-steamer" is
reported in Novorossisk. According to
interrogations the enemy is converting their
paddle-steamers into river monitors. It
seems likely therefore that the paddle-steamers
sighted more than once off the east coast of
the Sea of Azov will be well-armed (10.5 cm.).

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0610

Tanker "Le Progres" put in to Constantza
from Ochakov via Sulina escorted by gunboat
"Dumitrescu".

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Group 1, Danube Flotilla laid fresh markings in the Illichevka minefield gap. Group 2 checked routes Yellow and Green. No mines swept.

The naval ferry barge group continued marking the routes.

South Russian Area:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 checked Odessa harbor with magnetic gear. No mines swept.

Crimea:

1645

Air attack on Eupatoria. One tent and articles of equipment belonging to the Naval Searchlight Unit were destroyed. No casualties.

Iron Gates area: Check sweeps by guardboats "Tronje" and "Alzei" were without incident.

Readiness:

Torpedoboot "Smeul" and gunboat "Dumitrescu" non-operational. Duration will be reported later.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported no special incidents apart from several enemy raids which were successfully repulsed.

CONFIDENTIAL

29 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, fair, visibility 10 miles, sea 1,
temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

The freighter (4,000 - 5,000 G.R.T.) lying in Sevastopol on 27 April put out at 2015 on 28 April accompanied by a destroyer and 3 patrol vessels. The convoy was unsuccessfully attacked with aerial torpedoes during the night. Air reconnaissance again sighted the convoy early on 29 April and maintained contact. The attacks were unsuccessful.

The formation which Main Naval D/F Station discovered in the northeastern Black Sea on 28 April - 1 cruiser and 4 destroyers - detached 1 destroyer to escort the convoy. This destroyer was located 3 times, the last time off Tuapse. Presumably the convoy has now arrived in Tuapse.

From aerial photographs the warship formation itself has put in to Sevastopol. The only discrepancy is that the cruiser detected here is a "light cruiser" while Main Naval D/F Station had reported cruiser A - "Voroshilov".

A Turkish freighter, course west, was proceeding close to the Turkish coast near Kerempch Burnu.

The Air Force successfully attacked a tug with a barge off Yeisk.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

1030

I reported to Marshal Antonescu in Bucharest and expressed my thanks for the decoration presented to me by the Commander of the Navy. Following that:

Conference on Situation and Plans:

1. Report on my tour of inspection through the Crimea and Ukraine.

Army's plans and support to be given by Navy.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. Information on probable date of arrival and readiness, also proposed disposition and operational bases of Italian and German units.
3. Offensive operations by naval forces will relieve difficulties of convoy work and coastal threat in the western Black Sea, particularly in the Odessa area.

Marshal Antonescu requested:

1. For the defense of Odessa:
 - a. Exhaustive reconnaissance of the sea area by day.
 - b. Number of searchlight positions to be increased to give maximum illumination out to sea.
 - c. Mines to be laid against seaborne invasion and at possible landing points.

On this point Admiral Giurgescu reported that the harbor entrance is already mined, but not the seaward approaches.

- d. Strengthening of the coastal defense artillery.
2. Re operations by light naval forces:
 - a. Avoid concentration of naval forces in Constantza which is already an attractive target for air raids.
 - b. Forces to be dispersed as much as possible, making use of Danube Delta, Valkov, Ismail and Tulcea. Floating repair units to be used.
 - c. In view of the danger from air raids boats must be berthed as far apart as possible in all harbors. This regulation to be observed without fail.

The Marshal emphasized the vulnerability of the following coastal points:

- a. Constantza - oil harbor, fleet - weak point Chernavoda bridge.
- b. Bugaz - completed installations on Caroline Island. The ferry boat has required 4 months to construct, and in view of the fact that all the supply traffic will pass through Bugaz, this place must be regarded as especially vulnerable. It requires increased protection, including mines.

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c. Sulina - dredging work on the ship canal at the mouth of the Danube.

d. Odessa - danger of landings.

0500 Naval ferry barges Nos. 130 and 132 put out from Constantza for Skadovsk.

1230 Tanker "Le Progres" left for Sulina with destroyer "Maresti". She will there join the Ochakov convoy comprising motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar".

1625 Steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" sailed for the north escorted by the destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti".

1800 Forecast from Meteorological Station, Constantza contained a warning of a possible deterioration in the weather. It therefore now seemed impossible to complete the various escort assignments, as the motor minesweepers (FR) of Danube Flotilla, which are of low endurance, could not provide anti-mine escort from Bugaz to Ochakov. For this reason Naval Special Duties Detachment ordered the convoy of steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" with the escorting destroyers to return to Constantza. They put in at 2000.

Destroyer "Maresti" was ordered to proceed with tanker "Le Progres" to Sulina. Group Lox was to put in to Bugaz.

2300 Naval ferry barge No. 130 reported by Most Immediate radiogram 2115/29/87:
"Have struck a mine, approximate position 46° N, 30° 25' E. Ship beached".

As she can still use her radio transmitter, she cannot be seriously damaged. Naval Special Duties Detachment immediately ordered Danube Flotilla lying in Bugaz to meet the other 2 ferry barges from Group Lox and escort them back to Bugaz, and if the situation so demands rescue the crew from naval ferry barge No. 130.

The naval ferry barge group of Danube Flotilla continued to lay marking buoys on routes Green and Yellow.

Danube Flotilla checked route Green without result. Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 searched Odessa harbor with magnetic gear. No mines swept.

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South Russian Area:

From Mariupol, Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported that on the evening of 28 April the coast and town of Mariupol were bombarded by a motor gunboat with a gun of approximately 10.5 cm. caliber from a range of 3,500 - 4,000 meters. No casualties or damage at Naval Shore Commander's H.Q. After 15 shells, the gunboat put up a smoke screen and then made off to the east.

The motor fishing vessels continued their transportation of supplies between Mariupol and Taganrog according to plan.

Crimea:

1810 - Several air raids on Eupatoria. No material
0250 damage reported, no casualties.

Iron Gates area: Guardboat "Tronje" carried out check sweeps. No incidents reported. Guardboat "Gernot" at readiness in Orsova, "Alzei" in Moldova.

Readiness:

Motor minesweeper FR 8 operational.

One Bulgarian E-boat non-operational for 5 days for repairs.

General:

Laying of defensive minefields in Karkinitzki Bay:

After the two projected UMA minefields had been laid between the island of Dzhariulgach and Kylv lighthouse, Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine was given instructions in Gkdos. 1374 A I regarding the use of the remaining 66 FMB mines and the UMA mines which Group Lex is at present bringing from Constantza to Skadovsk.

1. Eight FMB mines are to be reserved for mining the harbor channels at Skadovsk and Chorly in the event of an actual enemy attack.
2. The remaining 50 FMB and 50 UMA mines can probably best be used to mine the coastal area off Klarovka which is particularly suitable for an enemy landing. The most vulnerable points are the approaches to Tendra Peninsula - about longitude 32° 15' E - where the enemy made an unsuccessful landing attempt on 16 March - see War Diary of that date - and the area off the Sovievka lighthouse - 32° 31.5' E.

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Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine was ordered to draw up his plans accordingly, bearing in mind the positions of the Army Coastal Artillery Detachments.

The mines still available will not be used to reinforce the minefields already laid, as such a measure would not add materially to their effectiveness. Similarly it is not intended to lay flanking minefields off the harbor approaches, as these do not increase the degree of protection afforded and on the other hand make it more difficult for our own ships to use the harbors.

CONFIDENTIAL

30 April, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 4, overcast, rain, visibility
6 miles, sea 3, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

Main Naval D/F Station reported that the
formation which put in to Sevastopol on
29 April had sailed again and was probably in
the sea area off the Crimea round about noon.

One submarine was detected off Sevastopol and
one off Batum.

Slight activity of minesweepers and guard
vessels off the east coast near the bases
and in Kerch Strait. A depot ship for M.T.B.s
was located 25 miles south of Theodosia.
Possibly she is the ship which was reported
off Sevastopol on 27 April. She probably
serves as a base for the M.T.B.s which escort
the convoys from the east coast to Sevastopol
and Kerch.

Shipping in port:

Novorossisk (aerial photograph): About 60,000
tons of merchant shipping - no real change.

Akhtari (east coast of Sea of Azov): Many
small craft again - 20 fishing vessels and
60 small boats.

Yeisk: 4 paddle-steamers, 1 small freighter
and 45 small craft.

Reports on movements of vessels in the open
sea are not yet to hand.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0200

Tanker "Le Progres" and destroyer "Marcești"
arrived off Sulina. The tanker immediately
put in to harbor, but the escorting destroyer
had to anchor in the roads until 0600 because
of the difficulty of crossing the bar. When
the weather improves the convoy will continue
passage to Ochakov with 2 more supply vessels
(see War Diary 29 April).

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0115 The 2 undamaged naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 139 from Group Lex were escorted to Bugaz by 2 minesweepers (FR).

According to a report from the commander of Group Lex, naval ferry barge No. 130 was struck in the starboard bow by a drifting mine which the leading barge had sighted astern a short time previously. As far as could be seen it was a small round mine. The commander of naval ferry barge No. 130 immediately made for the shore and beached his boat in 45° 50.5' N, 30° 16.5' E. Depth of water 2 - 3 meters. The crew was taken over unhurt by another barge. All secret material saved.

According to a supplementary report from the Deputy Commander, Danube Flotilla, the barge is beached with a heavy list to starboard, her stern just showing above the surface of the water. Both stern anchors out. Engine and radio gear apparently undamaged. Rumanian Military Detachment has begun salvaging the cargo, but work is difficult on account of the steep coast.

Special Duties Detachment plans to send 2 naval ferry barges from Sulina and 2 tugs from Constantza to attempt salvage work. The Dockyard Salvage Detachment, Black Sea has been instructed to send an expert from the Odessa station to investigate salvage possibilities on the spot.

1310 Naval Radio Station, Bugaz reported 2 mine
and explosions, probably drifting mines. Bearing
1340 in mind that naval ferry barge No. 130 struck
a mine, it is possible that the enemy is using
"Fischchen" mines. Danube Flotilla has
been ordered to make further investigations.

South Russian Area:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 again searched Odessa harbor with magnetic gear. No mines discovered.

Crimea:

Several air raids on Eupatoria during the night. No damage reported. One plane, after being fired on, was seen in flames over the sea and then it disappeared.

Vessels with improvised gear began minesweeping.

Readiness:

Guardboat "Gernot" non-operational until 1 May for de-aeration.

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Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported that, on the basis of observation of fresh enemy tanks, repeated statements from deserters and enemy behavior during the previous night, there is a possibility that the enemy is going over to the attack. No particular incidents on the Sevastopol front.

(Signed) Fleischer.

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Naval Group Command South.

4 June, 1942.

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea

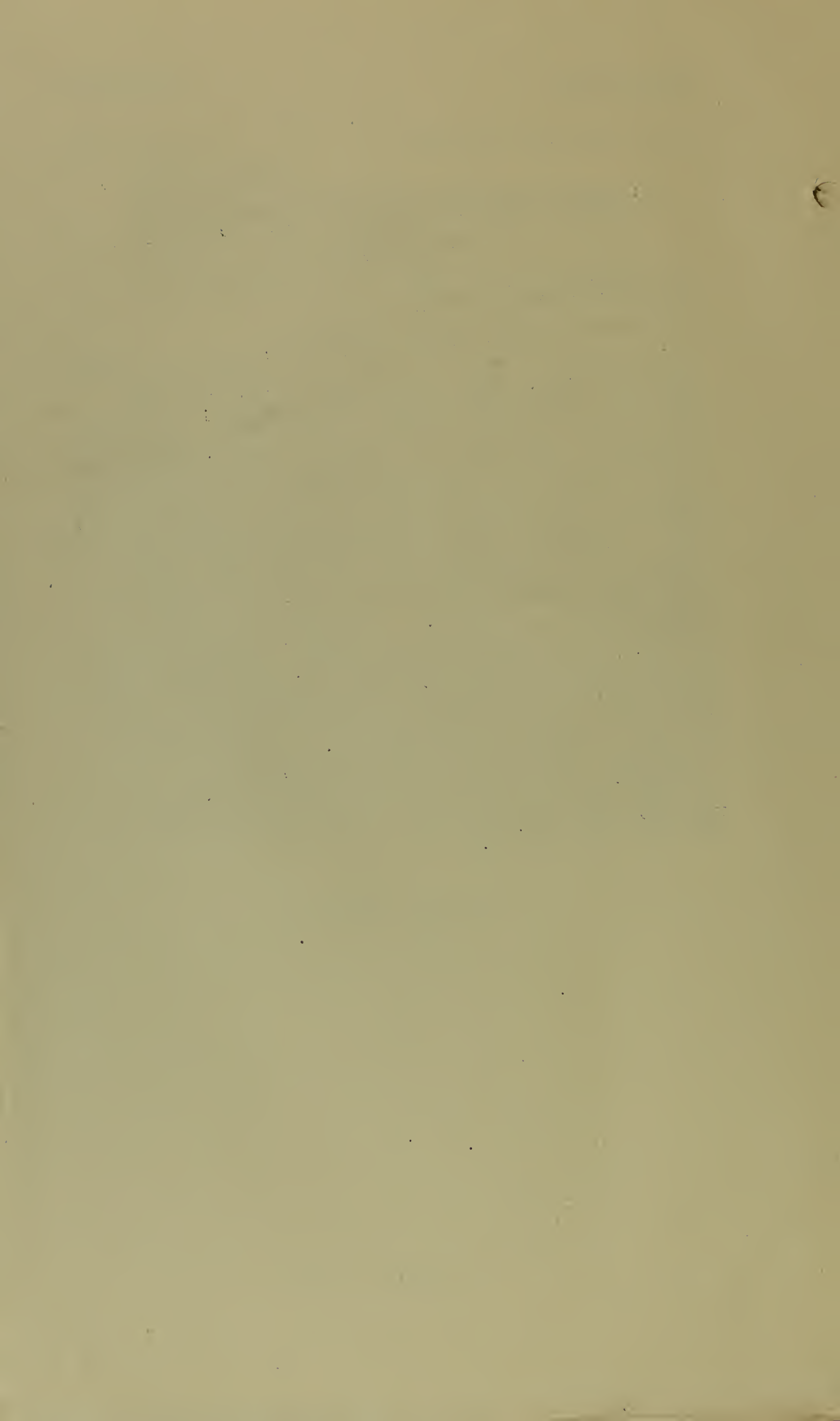
16 - 30 April

"Own Situation", 20 April

Re Conference with Marshal Antonescu:

Marshal Antonescu does not make clear to whom his demands are addressed. Admiral, Black Sea must fit in the necessary action arising from these demands with the aims of our own naval warfare in that area. For Naval Group South considers that the Admiral's main task will in future be the control of offensive operations by the German E-boats (which have now arrived in the Black Sea) and the Italian submarines and E-boats in support of the operations against Sevastopol and later against the Russian supplies and the Russian forces on the east coast. Group confidently expects that this offensive warfare carried out in cooperation with the Air Force will materially assist the escort and defensive assignments in the western Black Sea. In future, the escort duties there will have to be taken over in increasing measure by the Rumanian naval forces. Commander, Naval Special Duties Detachment, Constantza will continue to see that these convoys serve the best interests of the German Armed Forces and will be responsible for their operational and tactical direction. In his capacity as Chief of Staff of the Rumanian Navy, he will be in a position to exert his influence accordingly. Commander, Naval Special Duties Detachment will carry out this task in accordance with instructions from Admiral, Black Sea, who will assign him such forces as the situation permits.

(Signed) Schuster.



CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 15 MAY, 1942

PG/31510

CONFIDENTIAL

1 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza 0600):

No wind, overcast, rain, visibility 3 miles,
sea 1, temperature 11° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance planes detailed by Air Commander, South sighted no enemy shipping in the Sevastopol area in the morning. In the afternoon 4 escort vessels were detected, 3 of which were off Cape Khersonese. In the evening shipping traffic increased, but could no longer be clearly identified.

At 1515 a long-range reconnaissance plane reported 1 tanker of about 8,000 tons, course northwest, 80 miles south of Tuapse, escorted by 5 M.T.B.s.

Evaluation of aerial photographs showed that the number of ships in the ports on the northeast coast and on the Sea of Azov was almost unchanged.

According to a report from Main Naval D/F Station, the formation (cruiser A and 3 destroyers) which put out from Sevastopol yesterday is still at sea in an unknown position.

Some submarines were also detected, 2 of which were in the eastern Black Sea.

Radio traffic generally slight.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

As the weather had calmed down and forecasts for the next 24 hours were favorable, Naval Special Duties Detachment determined to have the 2 postponed convoy assignments carried out.

1700

1. Steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" put out from Constantza for the north escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti". Tugs "Oltul" and "Elena" proceeded with them as far as Sulina, where they were to help to salvage the damaged naval ferry barge No. 130. Danube Flotilla was to pick up the convoy on route Green off Cape Burnas at 0700 on 2 May.

2240 2. Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar", tanker "Le Progres" and tug "Engorau" put out from Sulina for the north escorted by destroyer "Maresti" and 6 naval ferry barges. Convoy to be picked up as above at 0600 on 2 May.

Seven motor minesweepers (FR) of Danube Flotilla carried out a check sweep on route Green from Bugaz as far as the northern entrance to the Ilichevka minefield gap and back as far as 45° 56' N and from there back to Bugaz. No mines swept.

The remaining 2 motor minesweepers (FR) and 2 naval ferry barges proceeded to the place where naval ferry barge No. 130 was aground to make another attempt at salvage. The boats had to remain 300 meters from the coast because of a strong offshore wind. Some 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns, small arms, ammunition, equipment etc. were salvaged. The whole barge is filled with water up to the waterline.

Bulgarian Area:

The remaining German anti-aircraft guns in the Bulgarian area were transferred for use elsewhere. From now on only Bulgarian anti-aircraft guns will protect Varna and Burgas.

South Russian Area:

Minesweeping in Odessa harbor by mine-exploding vessel No. 191 was without result.

Air attacks on Mariupol (time not mentioned). No damage to naval offices or installations.

Motor fishing vessels continued supply traffic as scheduled.

Crimea:

First degree of alarm in Theodosia because enemy landing operations are feared in connection with the enemy offensive plans suspected by 11th Army H.Q.

Minesweeping off Ak Mechet. One mine was exploded off Burun Eli; 2 mines off Karacha.

Eupatoria roads were checked for mines without result. Naval Liaison Officer to Air Commander, South reported that from today the air forces in the Crimea were subordinated to 8th Air Corps. Only 2 bomber Gruppen were left to Air Commander, South for attacks on ships and sea reconnaissance.

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This measure is only valid during the intended Kerch offensive when sea reconnaissance must be restricted to the area off Sevastopol and the Crimea as far as Kerch Peninsula, the Sea of Azov and the northeast coast as far as Novorossisk.

In view of the convoy assignments to be carried out, this reduction in air reconnaissance over the Black Sea is very regrettable, as the planes taking off from Bulgarian and Rumanian bases can fly only as far as 32° E. Moreover, only a few planes are available for that task, so that reconnaissance will by no means give a complete picture. For the time being, enemy movements and intentions must be deduced from the reports of Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza.

No incidents in the Iron Gates area. The 3 guardboats are at readiness in Orsova, Trencova and Moldova.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported no action apart from lively enemy air activity on both fronts and some unsuccessful enemy reconnaissance thrusts.

Only scouting raids by both sides and lively enemy air activity were reported by 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

Readiness:

Minelayer "Dacia" operational with limitations (bow protection gear not yet tested).

2 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, fair, visibility 15 miles, sea 0,
temperature 10° C.

Enemy Situation:

At 0842 Air Commander, South reported several enemy submarines about 35 miles south of Bolshoi Fontan. This report of submarines operating together, evidently against supply traffic, appears very doubtful. Possibly they were German minesweepers. There were only a few other air reconnaissance reports. At 1400 a long-range reconnaissance plane reported 4 M.T.B.s south of Kerch Strait, proceeding north.

According to the evaluation of aerial photographs, the number of ships in the ports was unchanged.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported some submarines (no exact number given) in the western Black Sea and in the area off Sevastopol and Batum. Otherwise only slight activity of patrol vessels in the area off the bases on the Caucasus coast.

The Main Radio Intercept Station of Naval High Command reported that the enemy C-in-C Fleet had been ordered to escort various transports carrying troops and supplies to Sevastopol. As neither air reconnaissance nor Main Naval D/F Station had recently submitted any observations indicating such activity, I inquired of Naval High Command whether the date for the escort assignment was known.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

Both convoys which put out yesterday ran as scheduled.

1. Off Cape Burnas, a group of Danube Flotilla and tug "Forsch" took over from destroyer "Maresti" and the 6 naval ferry barges the convoy comprising motor vessels "Kassa", "Kolosvar", tanker "Le Progres" and tug "Engerau" which was proceeding north from Sulina. They passed Ochakov at 1545. The motor minesweepers (FR) put in to port, while the supply ships continued to Nikolaiev.

CONFIDENTIAL

0840 2. A submarine attacked the second northbound convoy (steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" and 2 naval ferry barges) about half a mile east of Green 24. The destroyers and naval ferry barges immediately counter-attacked with depth charges, but no success was observed.

We have no permanent anti-submarine group of naval ferry barges here for attacks on submarines. If possible, such a group must be formed from naval ferry barges or submarine chasers equipped with hydrophones. Only then will it be possible to master the submarine danger. Steps have been taken to form an anti-submarine group.

Group 2, Danube Flotilla then took over the convoy off Cape Burnas and escorted it to Ochakov without further incident. The motor mine-sweepers (FR) put in to Ochakov at 1745, while the 2 supply steamers continued to Nikolaiev.

After they had carried out their escort assignment, destroyers "Regina Maria", "Maresti" and "Marasesti" returned to the south. They came upon a very large oil patch in the attack area and laid a buoy to mark the place. Investigation of the oil track was impossible because of fog.

1430 Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" put in to Sulina from the north.

1600 Destroyer "Maresti" continued to Constantza and entered the harbor.

Rumanian Area:

0120 Tugs "Elena" and "Oltul" put in to Sulina (on passage to salvage naval ferry barge No. 130, see War Diary 1 May).

0400 Naval ferry barge No. 132 put out from Bugaz for Constantza to discharge 200 explosive floats and to take in in their place 50 UMA mines (to replace the mines aboard the grounded naval ferry barge No. 130). Salvage of No. 130 was continued by naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 and 2 Rumanian motor ferries.

2200 Naval Radio Station, Bugaz reported 2 loud explosions in quick succession in the south. No further observations.

2210 Naval ferry barge No. 132 put in to Constantza from Bugaz.

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South Russian Area:

1300 An Army Coastal Artillery Detachment near Klarovka (north coast of Karkinitzki Bay) heard engine noises at sea. No further observations because of fog.

2110 Naval Port Commander, Skadovsk reported that engine noises of a naval vessel and 2 intermittent red lights had been observed.

It is possible that both observations may be traced back to a German air accident at sea. Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force was asked to investigate the matter. No results so far.

Crimea:

Further minesweeping off Eupatoria was without result.

From 2020 on 1 May until 0325 on 2 May, there were 15 enemy planes over our area. Altogether 65 bombs were dropped but no damage has been reported so far.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported that the enemy had apparently gone over to the defensive on the eastern front. Throughout the day there was almost no infantry activity. No incidents were reported from 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

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3 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

Wind force 1, fair, visibility 20 km., sea 0,
temperature 11° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air Commander, South reported that morning reconnaissance had sighted no enemy naval forces or convoy traffic as far as the Turkish coast. However, the following reports were received from the Caucasus coast:

At 0625 1 convoy (1 tanker of 8,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 1 M.T.B.), course 130°, 65 miles south of Tuapse; at 0910 1 cruiser, course 230°, 80 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 1540 one 5,000-ton steamer putting out from Ghelenjik, course 110°.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza again reported only very slight radio traffic: only 1 submarine at sea (exact position unknown) and 1 destroyer in the Batum area.

The slight radio traffic during the last few days is by no means conclusive proof of enemy inactivity, particularly as air reconnaissance has not been exhaustive. It is quite possible that the enemy transferred reinforcements to Sevastopol as reported by Main Radio Intercept Station, Naval High Command and that they tried to camouflage these movements by radio silence.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

The southbound convoy consisting of steamers "Sulina" and "Oituz" proceeded from Ochakov to Constantza as scheduled.

- 0710 Group 2, Danube Flotilla (4 motor minesweepers (FR)) put out from Ochakov with the 2 supply steamers.
- 1620 Rumanian naval forces and 4 naval ferry barges took over the convoy south of Bugaz. The convoy was divided because of the difference in speed of the 2 steamers. Destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" which had put out from Sulina at 1311 took over steamer "Sulina" for further passage to Constantza, while torpedo boat "Smcul" put out from Sulina at 1145 and 4 naval ferry barges (1st Special Duties Flotilla) left at 0940 to take over steamer "Oituz" for further passage to

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Sulina, from where the steamer was to be escorted to Constantza by destroyer "Maresti".

1715 Group 2, Danube Flotilla put in to Bugaz.

Bulgarian Area:

0845 After completion of repairs, naval ferry barge No. 121 put out from Varna and entered Constantza at 1640. Continuation of passage to Sulina to the minesweeping group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla was planned for 4 May.

Rumanian Area:

Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 continued the attempts to salvage naval ferry barge No. 130. It was a difficult task because of the high swell. Nevertheless they succeeded in salvaging the following arms, equipment etc.: 11 UMA mines, the tube and cradle of the 7.5 cm. gun, 22 cases of machine-guns (type C 30), ammunition, 200 rounds of 7.5 cm. shells, 22 winches, all parts for mines, oropesa equipment, 8 depth charges etc. It was discovered that the hull was broken where the mine hit it.

To help in the salvage, the office of Dockyard Control Staff, Odessa sent out 2 engineers with personnel and equipment to the place of grounding on 4 May.

1520 Three enemy bombers, type DB 3, attacked Sulina, flying southwest to north at an altitude of 2,000 meters. Six bombs were dropped. No casualties.

Mines and Barrage Command, Constantza reported 200 of the 400-ELM mines reported not ready for use on 8 April were now ready.

South Russian Area:

Another check sweep by mine-exploding vessel No. 191 was without result. Checking of Odessa harbor should be completed tomorrow, when the harbor approaches will then be searched as far as route Green.

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reported that investigation of the engine noises reported yesterday off Skadovsk had brought no results. No further observations indicating enemy shipping traffic have been made. According to reports from Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force, no German plane crashed at sea.

A boom was laid off Mariupol.

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Crimea:

From 2230 on 2 May until 0315 on 3 May, there were further air attacks on Eupatoria. Windows broken in the garrison headquarters.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates.

Land Situation:

According to a report from 11th Army H.Q., enemy procedure remained unchanged on both fronts. A reconnaissance thrust by 2 companies was repulsed on the Kerch front during the evening. Otherwise no incidents.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Chiculescu" and torpedoboat "Sborul" provisionally ready for operations again on 4 May.

Naval ferry barge No. 121 operational.

4 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 1, overcast, rain, visibility
10 km., sea 1, temperature 11° C.

Enemy Situation:

While sea reconnaissance planes detailed by
Air Commander, South again failed to sight any
enemy shipping between the southern tip of the
Crimea and the Turkish coast, Main Naval D/F
Station, Constantza reported that compared with
yesterday activity of enemy naval forces had
increased. They detected 4 minesweepers,
3 M.T.B.s and some patrol boats in the north-
eastern Black Sea to the southern entrance of
Kerch Strait, 1 cruiser and 1 flotilla leader
in the southeastern Black Sea at 1730, 1 mine-
sweeper, 1 tender, and 4 M.T.B.s in the area
off Sevastopol and the Crimea and 2 submarines
in the central and western Black Sea.

On the night of 3/4 May, air reconnaissance
identified continuous convoy traffic off the
northeast coast in the direction of Kerch:
14 small freighters with anti-mine escort
(4 minesweepers) proceeding from Anapa to
Kerch and 8 freighters on the same course.
Air reconnaissance did not sight any naval
escort with the second convoy.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

The convoy comprising steamers "Sulina" and
"Oituz" which put out yesterday ran as
scheduled.

0430 Steamer "Sulina" put in to Constantza from the
north escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and
"Marasesti".

1520 Steamer "Oituz" put in to Constantza from the
north escorted by destroyer "Maresti".

Shuttle traffic started between Odessa and
Kherson.

0715 Naval ferry barges Nos. 125, 128, 133 and 134
put out from Odessa laden with supplies. Two
boats of Harbor Defense Flotilla, Odessa will
escort the boats as far as Ochakov, and
Commander, Danube Flotilla with Group 1 will
take over from there as far as Kherson.

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1830 The group of naval ferry barges put in to Kherson as scheduled.

After the channel had been marked with minefield buoys as far as Ochakov-North, it was planned to run shuttle traffic from Odessa to Kherson and back without escort as soon as possible.

Bulgarian Area:

Check sweep in the southern entrance to Varna Bay was without result.

Rumanian Area:

0400 Naval ferry barge No. 121 put out from Constantza for the north and put in to Sulina at 1320. She returned to the minesweeping group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla.

0400 Naval ferry barge No. 132 also put to sea, course north, to transfer to Skadovsk as scheduled (see War Diary 2 May). She had to put in to Sulina at 1325 when the weather deteriorated.

The personnel sent out from the Odessa office of Dockyard Control Staff and naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 continued the attempts to salvage naval ferry barge No. 130.

South Russian Area:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 completed the check of Odessa harbor area and also swept the area from the harbor entrance as far as point 0 3 and buoy 16. No mines swept.

Crimea:

Rumanian coastal defense forces sank a black anchored buoy with mast and 2 red crossed flags about 6 km. south of Kalsichor (near Sudak).

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that investigations were being carried out to determine the purpose of the buoy. Probably it had served as an approach buoy for submarines or for planned landing operations.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported that Russian motor boats apparently made a landing attempt last night west of Nogaisk (20 miles west of Berdyansk) but withdrew after a brief exchange of fire. Otherwise nothing to report.

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11th Army H.Q. reported slight exchanges of gunfire, but no infantry activity.

Readiness:

Gunboat "Chiculescu" ready for operations.

Torpedoboat "Sborul" ready for operations, but still has to pass the degaussing loop on 5 May.

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5 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, no cloud, visibility 20 km.,
sea 1, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air Commander, South transmitted only one report on the reconnaissance flown over the narrow sea area off the Crimea: no enemy shipping was observed.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza also reported only slight enemy traffic.

During the night cruiser A and 2 destroyers were still detected in the eastern Black Sea, but they had gone by daylight. Probably the formation had put in to port.

Two submarines, 1 minelayer, 2 minesweepers and 6 M.T.B.s were identified in the area off Batum. Between Kerch Strait and Tuapse there was normal activity of patrol forces and M.T.B.s. One submarine was detected at sea in an unidentified position.

Because of inexhaustive air reconnaissance, it could not be discovered whether only comparatively few naval forces had been at sea during the last few days or whether possibly further ships or formations had been at sea and had maintained complete radio silence.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

The northbound convoy (steamer "Zar Ferdinand" from Constantza and steamer "Danubius", motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" from Sulina to Ochakov) which was scheduled to put to sea today had to be delayed for 24 hours on account of unfavorable weather.

Mines and Barrage Command, Constantza reported another 100 mines of the 400 EMCs reported unserviceable on 8 April ready for use again (now a total of 300 mines).

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The remaining cargo of the beached naval ferry barge No. 130 (the rest of the 37 UMA mines and 2 mine cases, pivot of the 7.5 cm. gun) was salvaged. It was planned to attempt to tow the vessel off on 6 May.

South Russian Area:

0600 Tanker "Le Progres" put out from Kherson for Ochakov escorted by motor minesweeper FR 1 and tug "Forsch". FR 1 entered Ochakov at 1220 on account of the weather, while tug "Forsch" escorted the tanker to Odessa where they arrived at 1800. The transport group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla (naval ferry barges Nos. 125, 128, 133 and 134) put to sea from Kherson with supplies for Saporoshie (about 300 km. up the Dnieper).

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reported no incidents today.

Nikolaiev dockyard reported that the Fire Fighting Company (1 officer, 13 N.C.O.s and 147 enlisted men) had arrived.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported an air attack on Eupatoria without mentioning time, damage, etc.

Iron Gates: Guardboat "Gernot" ready in Orsova and "Tronje" in Trencova. "Alzei" checked the route as far as Bazias without incident.

Land Situation:

No report for the day was received from Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) or 11th Army H.Q.

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6 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 2, almost entirely overcast,
visibility 10 miles, sea 1, temperature 10° C.

Enemy Situation:

Again only a few reports were received from Air
Commander, South:
2 M.T.B.s 30 miles south of Cape Sarich,
2 submarines off Ghelenjik and at least 80 small
vessels in Sukhum harbor.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported
considerably increased activity of enemy naval
forces.

During the night cruiser D was in the area off
Batum or Poti; she was detected off Tuapse in
the forenoon. There were many submarines at
sea: 6 in the eastern and southeastern Black
Sea and 7 off the Crimea and in the western
Black Sea.

Undoubtedly the enemy will have recognized that
seaborne supply traffic is proceeding regularly
from Constantza to the north and it was to be
expected that they would intensify submarine
operations accordingly. However, it might also
be possible that the lively radio traffic of
submarines indicates that fresh boats have put
to sea as reliefs for the boats which have been
maintaining radio silence.

In the Crimean area and the western Black Sea
there were 2 minelayers and 1 destroyer.
Increasing activity of minesweepers and patrol
forces in the area off the bases on the Caucasus
coast and Kerch Strait.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

- 1210 1. Steamer "Zar Ferdinand" put out from Constantza
to the north escorted by destroyer "Maresti"
and torpedo boat "Sborul".
- 2130 Steamer "Danubius" and motor vessels "Tisza"
and "Budapest" joined the above convoy off
Sulina and proceeded north with it. The
escort forces were reinforced by gunboat
"Chiculescu" and 3 naval ferry barges of 1st
Special Duties Flotilla.

Danube Flotilla is to pick up the convoy south
of Bugaz as usual at dawn and continue to
Ochakov.

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1800 2. The Rumanian tugs "Elena" and "Oltul", each towing 1 train ferry, and 1 small paddle-steamer put out from Sulina for Bugaz escorted by torpedo boat "Smeul" and 3 naval ferry barges. Convoy to be picked up by Danube Flotilla as in para. 1.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0830 Group 2, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz to check route Green as far as the northern entrance to the Ilichevka minefield gap and back as far as 46° N. No mines swept. The boats returned at 1500. Naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 139 which were destined for Skadovsk were ordered to put to sea; for reasons of security they were to proceed south at first as far as the area off Cape Burnas, where they had to arrive at nightfall; from there they were to steer east for the north coast of Karkinitzki Bay. The naval ferry barges reported that they could not put out today because of a sudden deterioration in the weather (S winds, force 6). Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 took off more cargo from the damaged barge No. 130 (bow anchor, engine fittings, lockers and bunks).

South Russian Area:

1100 Tug "Forsch" put out from Odessa and entered Ochakov at 1455.

1430 Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine, who is to transfer his command post to the present focal point in his command on the Sea of Azov, left Nikolaiev with the first part-transport for Mariupol.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that a damaged plane had drifted ashore near Eupatoria. Details will follow. It was probably the enemy plane attacked on 30 April which disappeared out to sea in flames.

Nothing to report from the Iron Gates.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported no incidents on the Army front. Several air attacks on Mariupol harbor. Slight damage to naval installations reported (detailed

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report from Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine not yet received).

11th Army H.Q. reported that the enemy had strengthened their position on the eastern front where 7 divisions had been established. Apart from exchanges of gunfire, no incidents.

7 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

W winds, force 1, no cloud, visibility 20 km.,
sea 1, temperature 7° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to the observations of Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, cruiser D is no longer at sea (she probably put in to Tuapse, see War Diary 6 May).

The number of submarines at sea has decreased since yesterday. The exact position of 2 submarines was determined by radio location: 1 submarine immediately off Sudak at 2117 and 1 submarine 45 miles south of Yalta at 2352. There were 3 more submarines in the western Black Sea and 2 in the southeastern Black Sea.

Lively activity of minesweepers and patrol forces off Sevastopol and between Kerch Strait and the bases on the northeast Caucasus coast.

Air Commander, South reported that, during the proposed Kerch offensive (from 7 May), air reconnaissance could not be flown over the Black Sea. Accordingly, only one air reconnaissance report was received: 1 M.T.B. and 6 small craft were sighted in the northern entrance to Kerch Strait. If this is correct, it is the first report of an M.T.B. in the Sea of Azov.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

The convoys which put out yesterday ran as scheduled.

1. Destroyer "Maresti", torpedoboat "Sborul", gunboat "Chiculescu" and 3 naval ferry barges escorted steamers "Zar Ferdinand" and "Danubius" and motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" to the rendezvous south of Bugaz without incident; there Danube Flotilla took over the convoy for further passage north. The naval forces returned to Sulina and the 3 naval ferry barges put in to Bugaz. The 4 supply ships passed Ochakov at 1430 and the motor minesweepers (FR) of Danube Flotilla put in to port. "Tisza", "Budapest" and "Zar Ferdinand" continued to Nikolaiev, "Danubius" to Kherson.

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2. Tugs "Elena" and "Oltul", each towing 1 train ferry, and 1 small paddle-steamer put in to Bugaz at 0545, as did the 3 naval ferry barges which had joined the convoy from Sulina. Torpedoboat "Smeul" returned to Sulina.

The following escort assignments were also carried out:

1. Steamer "Arkadia" put out from Ochakov at 0800 escorted by tug "Forsch" and entered Odessa at 1300.
2. Tanker "Le Progres" put to sea at 1430 on an easterly course escorted by tug "Forsch". Tug "Forsch" put in to Ochakov at 1915. The tanker continued to Kherson.
3. At 0810 motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" put out from Ochakov to proceed to Sulina via Odessa escorted by Commander, Danube Flotilla with Group 1. At 1745 the convoy was taken over south of Bugaz by destroyer "Maresti", gunboat "Chiculescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul". The motor minesweepers (FR) put in to Bugaz at 1830.

At 1750 immediately after the convoy was turned over to the Rumanian naval forces, 3 enemy bombers attacked it. According to observations from the shore, 17 bombs were dropped but no hits scored. No report was received from the escort forces, so that it may be assumed that neither they nor the 2 motor vessels were damaged. The convoy proceeded to Sulina.

Bulgarian Area:

Special Duties Formation swept the northern entrance to Varna Bay and the Bulgarian mine-sweeping formation checked the inner bay. No mines swept.

Rumanian Area:

The 4 Italian E-boats were transferred to the Danube, towed by tug "Romulus". They arrived in Sulina at 1445 and continued to Constantza under their own power, arriving at 1900.

South Russian Area:

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported several air attacks on Mariupol and Taganrog on the night of 6/7 May. Slight damage to buildings.

Crimea:

Between 0001 and 0315, there were 3 air attacks on Eupatoria. No damage reported.

From 2000 on 6 May until 0300 on 7 May, there were several air attacks on Theodosia. About 100 bombs were dropped. Slight material damage. One man was seriously wounded and another slightly wounded.

Iron Gates: Guardboat "Gernot" ready in Orsova and "Tronje" in Trencova. "Alzei" carried out a check sweep in Kilia Arm as far as Bazias without incident.

Land Situation:

No report for the day was received from 11th Army H.Q.

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) reported no incidents in the coastal sector apart from lively air activity.

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8 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSW winds, force 1, fair, visibility 20 km.,
sea 1, temperature 9° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted continuous heavy
convoy traffic in the area off Tuapse,
Novorossisk and Kerch. This traffic was well-
protected, e.g. a tanker coming from the south-
east which put in to Novorossisk at 1035 was
escorted by 2 small cruisers, 1 submarine and
1 guardboat; another convoy, consisting of one
6,000-ton steamer and 1 small tanker, which was
south of Kerch Strait at 0757, was protected by
10 escort vessels.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza again reported
lively activity of enemy submarines: 8 in the
central and western Black Sea and 1 off
Novorossisk headed for Sevastopol.

Cruiser D was located in the northeastern Black
Sea and Commander, Light Forces was detected at
sea aboard an unidentified vessel.

Undoubtedly the lively activity of enemy naval
forces in the northeastern Black Sea is connected
with the offensive operation which 11th Army H.Q.
launched this morning on the Kerch front (see
"Land Situation").

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

1. The southbound convoy which put out yesterday
from Ochakov-North ran as scheduled. At 0200
motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar", gunboat
"Chiculescu" and torpedoboat "Smeul" put in
to Sulina. The 2 motor vessels continued to
Braila. At 0615 destroyer "Maresti" put in
to Constantza.
2. At 0930 steamer "Salzburg" put out from
Ochakov in a westerly direction escorted by
tug "Forsch" and entered Odessa at 1410.
Tug "Forsch" proceeded to Bugaz where she
arrived at 1730.

Bulgarian Area:

Special Duties Formation checked the northern
entrance to Varna Bay. No mines swept.

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Rumanian Area:

0756 1st Special Duties Flotilla consisting of 9 naval ferry barges put out from Bugaz for Sulina, from where they were to continue mine-sweeping in the enemy minefield off St. George Arm.

For 2½ hours, Special Duties Flotilla searched the spot where escort vessels of a northbound convoy had attacked an enemy submarine with depth charges on 2 May (about ½ mile east of Green 24) and where a large oil patch had later been sighted. Despite an intensive search in close formation with sounding and anchoring, no further observations were made.

When continuing passage, Special Duties Flotilla was attacked 8 times by 2-3 bombers from 1355 to 1420, 1450 to 1455 and 1729 to 1735. Bombs were dropped in series of up to 6 at a time. Naval ferry barge No. 145 was slightly damaged by bomb splinters: the commander and 1 man were seriously wounded. No damage to the other naval ferry barges and no casualties among their personnel.

1945. Special Duties Flotilla put in to Sulina without further incident.

South Russian Area:

0400 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put out from Ochakov for a check sweep off Nikolaiev. She entered Nikolaiev at 1000 without sweeping any mines.

From 2030 on 7 May until 0300 on 8 May, there were several air attacks on Eupatoria. No damage.

Iron Gates: Guardboat "Gernot" carried out a check sweep without incident.

Land Situation:

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported that our offensive on the Kerch front began this morning and so far had progressed as scheduled.

Nothing to report from the coastal sector of 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

Readiness:

Naval ferry barge No. 145 non-operational because of slight bomb damage.

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9 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

N winds, force 1, almost entirely overcast, visibility 20 km., sea 1, temperature 9° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance observations, the offensive on the Kerch front led to further lively, strongly escorted convoy traffic off the northeastern Black Sea coast.

At 0800 air reconnaissance sighted a convoy, comprising 1 tanker escorted by 1 destroyer and 4 minesweepers, midway between the Crimea and the Turkish coast. Bombers sent into action intercepted the convoy at 1832 in air grid square 6351 (about 155 miles south of the southern entrance to Kerch Strait) and attacked it without success. A strikingly high number of small freighters and coastal vessels was observed off the southeast coast of the Sea of Azov; they were probably concentrated there to take off enemy troops from Kerch Peninsula, if that should become necessary.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported cruiser D and another vessel with Commander, Light Forces aboard at sea in unidentified positions.

One flotilla leader and 3 submarines were off the northeast coast of the Black Sea, where there were also many minesweepers and patrol forces in the area off the bases.

Six submarines were located off the Crimea and in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

2000 Naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 139 put out from Bugaz on transfer to Skadovsk.

South Russian Area:

1100 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 put out from Nikolaiev for a check sweep downstream. She put in to Ochakov at 1645 without sweeping any mines.

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Crimea:

From 0215 to 0330, there were repeated air attacks on Eupatoria. No damage reported.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported that the offensive on the Kerch front was progressing successfully. Yesterday's penetration into the Parpach position was extended considerably. Four enemy divisions were repulsed with losses. Many enemy prisoners taken, many killed and many guns captured. 8th Air Corps temporarily eliminated the enemy air force in large-scale operations. According to a report from Naval Shore Commander, Crimea, enemy naval forces also took part in the fighting on land. During the night enemy vessels some distance south of Cape Ili (probably 1 cruiser and 2 destroyers) bombarded the isthmus.

No report for the day was received from 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

Readiness:

1 Bulgarian E-boat non-operational until 13 May.
Gunboat "Dumitrescu" again ready for operations.

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10 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

No wind, cloudy, visibility 6 miles, slight haze, temperature 10° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance again observed the effect of the offensive on the Kerch front on shipping in the Sea of Azov and south of Kerch Strait. Lively activity of small ships in the direction of Kerch, in the southeastern Sea of Azov and in the northeastern Black Sea as far as Anapa.

According to a report from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, there were 2 flotilla leaders, 1 destroyer, 1 submarine tender and 2 submarines off the northeast coast of the Black Sea. Also a great number of M.T.B.s and patrol forces.

Cruiser D was off the central Caucasus coast.

Four submarines were detected in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

- 0600 1. Tanker "Le Progres" (coming from Kherson) and Group 2, Danube Flotilla proceeded from Ochakov-North to Odessa where they arrived at 1115. Group 2 then continued to Bugaz and put in to port at 1415.
- 1600 2. The transport group of 1st Special Duties Flotilla (4 naval ferry barges) which had put out with supplies for Saporoshie on 5 May put in to Odessa again at 1600 after the task had been carried out.

Bulgarian Area:

- 0915 The Bulgarian minesweeping formation checked the area off Varna. One mine was swept near the wreck of "Regele Carol".

Rumanian Area:

U-boat "Delfinul" and the Bulgarian E-boat sighted a periscope about 4 miles east of Constantza. The E-boat dropped 4 depth charges but no hits were observed. Planes and tugs investigated immediately without result.

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- 0520 Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 which had come from Bugaz with the salvaged equipment, mines etc. from naval ferry barge No. 130 put out from Sulina and entered Constantza at 1340.
- 1800 Tugs "Oltul" and "Elena", each towing a train ferry, put out from Sulina for Bugaz escorted by gunboat "Chiculescu", torpedoboat "Sborul" and 7 naval ferry barges.
- 0600 Group 1, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz to check the area from routes Green and Yellow to Ochakov. They entered Ochakov at 1600. Report on result of minesweeping has not yet come in.

South Russian Area:

In the course of a check sweep in the area off the island of Pervomeisk, mine-exploding vessel No. 191 detonated a mine in 46° 34.4' N, 31° 34.1' E. Slight damage to the electric generator of the port aggregate which could be repaired in Nikolaiev.

- 1115 Naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 139 put in to Skadovsk. No incidents during passage.

Crimea:

No reports were received on any incidents in the command of Naval Shore Commander.

Iron Gates: Check sweep by guardboat "Gernot" as far as Moldova. "Tronje" ready in Trencova. "Alzei" in Modova. No incidents.

Land Situation:

According to a report from Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., our offensive on the Kerch front is progressing successfully.

Nothing to report from the coastal area of 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks).

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11 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NE winds, force 1, overcast, visibility 7 miles, sea 1, temperature 13° C.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted lively traffic of escort vessels and numerous (mainly small) steamers and boats in the Kerch Strait. They were probably there to attempt evacuation of the troops encircled by 11th Army H.Q.

There were no reports on enemy shipping traffic off the Caucasus coast. At 1600 an enemy formation comprising 1 small cruiser, 2 destroyers and probably 2 submarine chasers was sighted about 55 miles north of Cape Bafra Burnu. A second formation (cruiser "Komintern" and 3 submarine chasers) was 15 miles further south. Both formations were proceeding north. It is possible that all these enemy forces were to protect a 3,500-ton freighter observed by our air reconnaissance to the south in the vicinity of Turkish territorial waters. The freighter was steering northeast and was evidently a particularly valuable transport. No reports were received on shipping traffic other than that reported in connection with the above-mentioned heavy enemy naval forces.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza reported 1 flotilla leader, 1 destroyer (with Commander, Light Forces aboard) and 3 minesweepers in the Crimcan area, numerous minesweepers and patrol forces in the Kerch area and cruiser D off the central Caucasus coast. Several submarines were again detected in radio traffic: 5 in the north-eastern, 4 in the southeastern Black Sea. Further submarines were presumed to be in the western Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

1. At 0900 Commander, Danube Flotilla put out from Ochakov with Group 1 to escort steamers "Ardeal" and "Succava". The convoy proceeded according to plan; it was taken over at the rendezvous south of Bugaz by destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti" which had put out from Constantza and then returned to Constantza. Group 1, Danube Flotilla entered Bugaz at 2100.

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2. The Rumanian tugs "Oltul" and "Elena", which had put out from Sulina yesterday towing 2 train ferries and escorted by 7 naval ferry barges of 1st Special Duties Flotilla, put in to Bugaz at 0620 as scheduled. At 1110 tugs "Oltul" and "Elena" put out again for Sulina with 1 German tanker lighter. They arrived at 1645.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

1045 Torpedoboat "Sborul" and gunboat "Chiculescu" which had escorted the train ferry convoy as far as the rendezvous off Bugaz put in to Sulina.

South Russian Area:

No incidents in the command of Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine. The motor fishing vessel transports for 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) from and to Mariupol were continued as scheduled.

Crimea:

No incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. continued to make good progress. The larger part of the enemy forces (presumably 7 - 10 divisions) was encircled on the north coast of Kerch Peninsula in the vicinity of Arabatzkaya Bay. Our advance detachments are about 30 km. westsouthwest of Kerch. Waves of German planes attacked enemy shipping traffic: several freighters and numerous small craft were destroyed.

Readiness:

Torpedoboat "Smeul" non-operational for about 10 days for boiler repairs.

E-boat "Visculul" non-operational for 2 days for engine repairs.

Guardboat "Bechelaren" again ready for operations. She proceeded from Linz to the Iron Gates to reinforce the group of the Danube Flotilla operating there.

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12 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

NNE winds, force 1, almost entirely overcast, visibility 12 miles, sea 1.

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reported unchanged heavy traffic mostly of small freighters and small craft in Kerch Strait and off the northeast Caucasus coast.

Novorossisk: 1 large freighter of about 10,000 tons and 7 medium freighters.

There were no further reports on shipping traffic. All the planes are evidently operating over the Kerch front in support of 11th Army H.Q.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected the following naval forces in radio traffic: The old battleship "Parishkaya Kommuna" with C-in-C Fleet aboard, cruiser D and 1 submarine off the central part of the east coast. The old battleship was in radio contact with Sevastopol and vessels in the area off the northeast Caucasus coast. One flotilla leader, 1 destroyer with Commander, Light Forces aboard, and mine-sweepers and patrol forces were also detected in that area.

There were several submarines in the Crimean area and the western Black Sea. Slight activity of patrol forces south of Kerch Strait. Further submarines at sea in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

1. The southbound convoy ran as scheduled. Steamers "Suceava" and "Ardeal" put in to Constantza at 1300 escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria" and "Marasesti".
2. Steamer "Sulina" put out from Constantza to the north escorted by destroyer "Maresti".

2000

Motor vessels "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" put out from Sulina to the north escorted by gunboat "Stihi" and torpedoboat "Sborul". It is intended to have a group of Danube Flotilla pick up all 3 supply vessels at the rendezvous south of Bugaz at 0500 on 13 May and to escort them to Ochakov.

Bulgarian Area:

No mines were swept during a check sweep by Special Duties Formation in the southern entrance to Varna Bay.

Rumanian Area:

Mines and Barrage Command, Constantza reported the remaining 100 EMC mines of the 400 reported unserviceable on 8 April ready for use again.

0600

Commander, 1st Special Duties Flotilla put out from Bugaz to the south with 7 naval ferry barges and entered Sulina with 5 naval ferry barges at 1405. The other 2 naval ferry barges were to pick up a buoy of unknown origin found near the place of the last submarine attack; they too entered Sulina at 1700. It is not yet known whether they found the buoy.

The proposed transfer of further train ferries from Sulina to Bugaz had to be canceled on account of the weather. The convoy put in to Sulina at 1945.

South Russian Area:

No incidents.

Crimea:

No reports were received of special incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander.

At 0505 and 1002 Eupatoria was attacked. No damage reported.

Iron Gates: Guardboat "Bechelaren" is proceeding from Linz to the Iron Gates.

Check sweeps by "Alzei" and "Gernot" were without incident.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. reported very successful progress of the offensive on the Kerch front. The annihilation of the encircled enemy forces is nearing completion. Enemy attempts to attack behind our frontline were repulsed with heavy enemy losses.

General:

In view of the favorable progress of the Kerch offensive, 11th Army H.Q. intends to force the crossing of Kerch Strait as soon as possible in accordance with the Führer directive, in order

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to take full advantage of the situation while the enemy is in disorder.

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. reported by Most Immediate radiogram 2306/11/38 that Army Group South had consented to allocate the Coastal Defense Flotilla (previously operating off the north coast of the Sea of Azov under Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine for 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks)) to 11th Army H.Q. during the planned operation. 11th Army H.Q. requested the approval of Naval Group South and Admiral, Black Sea and asked that all available boats should be concentrated in Genichesk where they were to be prepared for action.

In Most Immediate radiogram 1028/12/92, Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. called attention to the fact that the planned operation would be possible only if the Navy assisted to their full extent. After concentration and preparation of the boats in Genichesk, it is intended to dispose these and combined operations boats in Ak Mona Bay for about 3 days. They will remain there to await developments.

After a telephone conversation with Naval Group Command, I replied to Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q., with copy to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine and Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks), that the Coastal Defense Flotilla would at once be subordinated to 11th Army H.Q. for the execution of the planned operation and to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea for administration. The naval shore commanders were directed to take all possible measures to equip the boats as quickly as possible.

I also ordered Lieutenant Commander Küster (previously Special Duties Detachment, Constantza) to fly to Simferopol on 13 May with Lieutenant Commander Siggmann, Admiral's Staff Officer for naval operations. They are to report to Naval Shore Commander, Crimea to learn of the proposals to be made to 11th Army H.Q. for the execution of the operation.

Naval Group Command, South pointed out in Most Immediate radiogram 1231/12/44 that the majority of the vessels would hardly be ready to proceed before the end of the month and that Genichesk harbor was not very suitable for assembling the Coastal Defense Flotilla as many installations had been destroyed because of the danger of enemy landings.

Naval Liaison Officer to 11th Army H.Q. inquired how many vessels could be made ready quickly and what their capacity would be. Naval Shore

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Commander, Ukraine replied as follows in Most Immediate radiogram 0927/12/89:

1. 26 boats ready in Mariupol and 5 boats in Genichesk.
2. There are 20 boats proceeding from Genichesk to Mariupol for repairs. As they are very liable to breakdowns, probably only about 10 will return to Genichesk.
3. From the 50 vessels of the transport fleet now operating in support of 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks), probably 30 more boats can be provided.

All these vessels can transport only troops with light infantry equipment: those in paras. 1. and 2. can carry about 60 men each, those in para. 3. about 15 men each.

The Siebel ferries now with 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks) could also be used for the crossing of Kerch Strait. Commander v. Both, Naval Liaison Officer, who will be here shortly on his way back from Sofia, will be informed of this and directed to examine at once the possibilities of transferring the ferries from Mariupol to Genichesk.

Naval ferry barges might also be considered. At present they are all engaged on escort tasks and minesweeping duty off the Rumanian/Bessarabian coast or as supply vessels from Odessa. As they would have to pass through the heavily patrolled Sevastopol area, the question of their employment will have to be examined more closely.

1st Naval Operational Transportation Detachment which has been allocated to Naval Shore Commander "W" was ordered to dispatch a train and several repair wagons at once to support the Coastal Defense Flotilla in Genichesk. All other competent offices were also ordered to take all possible measures to achieve readiness of the fishing vessels.

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15 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSE winds, force 2, cloudy, visibility 13 miles,
sea 2, temperature 13° C.

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance reports, enemy shipping traffic has considerably decreased in the Kerch Peninsula area. Moreover, very few naval forces were sighted. This may be due to the fact that only a few planes were on sea reconnaissance. However, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza also reported very slight enemy radio activity. Apart from the submarines believed to be in the western Black Sea, only cruiser A and 2 destroyers were detected off the Caucasus coast and cruiser F was heard in radio communication with other vessels off Novorossisk.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

Yesterday's northbound convoy ran as scheduled.

0514 Group 2, Danube Flotilla took over motor vessels "Sulina", "Kassa" and "Kolosvar" at the rendezvous south of Bugaz from destroyer "Maresti", gunboat "Stihi" and torpedoboat "Sborul" and escorted them to Ochakov-North without incident.

1435 Group 2, Danube Flotilla put in to Ochakov. The 3 supply ships continued to Nikolaiev where they arrived at 2100.

The above-mentioned Rumanian escort vessels put in to Constantza: "Maresti" at 1325, "Stihi" and "Sborul" at 1130.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0530 Commander, 1st Special Duties Flotilla put out from Sulina for Constantza with 4 naval ferry barges. They arrived at 1417.

South Russian Area:

Main Sea Transportation Office, Russia I reported that, on account of the very high water in the Dnieper, the supply shuttle service by naval

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ferry barges from Odessa to Saporoshie would have to be temporarily discontinued. The barges can only go as far as Kherson.

In reply to my query, 11th Army H.Q. reported that they no longer considered minelaying necessary off the north coast of Karkinitzki Bay near Klarovka to prevent enemy landings.

Group Lex (4 naval ferry barges now in Skadovsk) were at once ordered to store the 50 UMA mines and 50 FMB mines in Skadovsk. Two barges were then to proceed to Galatz via Bugaz as quickly as possible to be at the disposal of 16th Harbor Defense Flotilla which is fitting out there. The aim is to provide 10 barges for Sevastopol.

Plans:

With the 2 naval ferry barges, 16th Harbor Defense Flotilla will transfer to Ochakov-North as soon as possible to take in fuel and provisions. They will then check the shipping route via Tendra to Skadovsk with deviation to Ak Mechet and an anchorage east of Tendra light-house: see Appendix.

Crimea:

No incidents in the area of Naval Shore Commander.

Land Situation:

11th Army H.Q. again reported successful continuation of the operations against Kerch. The encircled enemy forces have been annihilated or taken prisoner. The rest of the enemy forces who are fleeing towards Kerch in general disorder are being pursued.

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14 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SSE winds, force 1, fair, visibility 10 miles,
sea 1, temperature 14° C.

Enemy Situation:

Slightly more enemy shipping was detected compared with yesterday. Many small merchant ships and fishing vessels were observed in Kerch Strait and off the east coast of the Sea of Azov.

At 1400 Air Communications Liaison Detachment reported that a battleship had put in to Sevastopol with several cruisers and destroyers and that a smoke screen had been laid in the harbor by 2 flying boats.

The report, at least concerning the battleship, seems improbable. Probably it concerns the formation which was sighted by 8th Air Corps about 55 miles north of the Turkish coast about 1600 on 11 May. Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza also favors this interpretation.

According to the situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, enemy forces are active, particularly in the eastern Black Sea. The following were intercepted in radio traffic: 2 destroyers, 5 submarines, 3 minelayers and many minesweepers, M.T.B.s and patrol vessels off the northeast Caucasus coast as far as Kerch Strait; cruiser F and 1 flotilla leader off the central part of the east coast; 1 submarine and several M.T.B.s and patrol vessels off the southeast coast as far as Batum; 8 submarines in the central and western Black Sea.

According to radio traffic, there are 2 more destroyers at sea in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

0430 Group 2, Danube Flotilla put out from Ochakov for Sulina with motor vessels "Tisza" and "Budapest" and tug "Engerau".

The convoy was picked up by gunboats "Chiculescu" and "Stihi" at the rendezvous south of Bugaz. Group 2 put in to Bugaz at 1500.

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2300 The Rumanian gunboats arrived in Sulina roads with the 3 supply ships. The supply ships proceeded up the Danube while the gunboats anchored in the roads until dawn.

Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

0500 Group 1, Danube Flotilla put out from Bugaz to check the route to Ochakov which they reached at 1300. No mines swept.

1830 Minelayers "Murgescu" and "Dacia" put out from Constantza escorted by destroyers "Regina Maria", "Maresti" and "Marasesti" to carry out minelaying operation L. (A flanking minefield of 200 UMB mines was to be laid in grid square 0628, some 20 miles southeast of Bugaz, to protect our supply traffic.)

South Russian Area:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 checked the area east of the island of Pervomeisk from 0900 to 1700. No mines swept.

1715 Naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 143 put out from Skadovsk for Galatz via Bugaz.

1630 Mariupol was bombed. Slight damage to naval offices. No further details so far.

Crimea:

Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that despite good weather the air reconnaissance which I had requested off Theodosia and Yalta had detected no shallow moored mines there. However, as the planes did not even sight the German FMB minefields there, the report is of doubtful value.

I informed Commander, Italian Naval Command of this situation. He intends to dispatch the 4 Italian E-boats in Constantza as soon as possible for operations in Yalta. Two or 3 naval ferry barges have been prepared in Constantza to supply the E-boats. They are to take the necessary stores, material, extra torpedoes etc. and the shore personnel to Skadovsk where trucks will be waiting to make the rest of the journey.

Land Situation:

Despite some desperate resistance, the pursuit of the enemy towards Kerch is progressing favorably.

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Although the enemy had many tanks, our troops managed to pierce the inner defenses of the town of Kerch. As 8th Air Corps has withdrawn most of the planes to support 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks), enemy embarkations on the north coast of Kerch Peninsula cannot be effectively countered.

General:

Santierele Navla Galati dockyard, Galatz: Rear Admiral Claussen of the Dockyard Control Staff reported that the contract between the Hermann Göring works and the Rumanian Government concerning the change in the dockyard management had not yet been completed despite repeated representations and assurances. Director Dilg of the Hermann Göring works had left and delivered an ultimatum that, if the contract were not ratified by the Rumanian Government by 31 May, the Hermann Göring works would have to cancel it. With Rear Admiral Claussen, I complained to Minister Dobre of the delay. He promised to discuss the matter with Marshal Antonescu on the following day and assured us that the contract would then be signed. In the interest of the combined war effort and in view of the urgency of a decision, I am sure that the only course was to appeal to the Marshal. Minister Dobre promised a reply by tomorrow evening.

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15 May, 1942

Weather forecast
(Constantza):

SE winds, force 1, overcast, visibility
15 miles, sea 2, temperature 13° C.

Enemy Situation:

Traffic of small vessels increased considerably in Kerch Strait. About 1030, many small boats, some of which were towed by tugs, were identified close to Taman Peninsula. Early in the afternoon there were 20 - 30 small ships and many fishing vessels in Kerch roads. This shows that the enemy is fleeing from Kerch.

Evaluation of aerial photographs showed that the battleship was in Poti yesterday and therefore could not have put in to Sevastopol - see War Diary 14 May.

According to the situation report from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, cruiser D - and not the battleship - put in to Sevastopol with at least 1 destroyer on the evening of 14 May.

In the central to western Black Sea there were 1 flotilla leader and 6 submarines, 2 of which were located 60 miles southwest of Sevastopol. Commander, Light Forces was at sea aboard an unidentified vessel with 2 destroyers, 3 submarines and several M.T.B.s and patrol vessels in the northeastern area as far as Kerch.

Last night cruiser F and 2 destroyers were observed in the eastern Black Sea and 1 submarine tender and 3 submarines in the southeastern area.

Own Situation:

Convoy and Escort Assignments:

- 0500 Group 1, Danube Flotilla put out from Ochakov for Odessa with "Zar Ferdinand". They reached Odessa at 0845 without incident.
- 1030 Group 1, Danube Flotilla put out again to escort steamers "Arkadia" and "Salzburg" to Nikolaiev and tanker "Le Progres" and the 4 naval ferry barges (transport group) to Kherson.
- 1500 The convoy passed Ochakov and Group 1, Danube Flotilla put in. The supply ships continued to Nikolaiev and Kherson.

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Bulgarian Area:

No incidents.

Rumanian Area:

Because of fog the minelaying formation which put out from Constantza yesterday had to anchor in Sulina roads from 0200 to 0400. Apart from this delay, the operation went according to plan. The formation is expected to return to Constantza at 2400.

0400 Naval ferry barges Nos. 126 and 137 put out from Constantza for Nikolaiev with life-belts, floats etc. The cargo is intended for Naval Shore Commander, Crimea for the crossing of Kerch Strait.

1430 Owing to deterioration in the weather, both naval ferry barges had to put in to Sulina. They intend to continue passage on 16 May.

Gunboats "Stihi" and "Chiculescu" checked the area from Sulina to route Red as far as 45° 23' N, 29° 56' E. No mines swept.

0500 Tug "Romulus" of the Danube Flotilla put out from Sulina for Bugaz. Somewhat north of the Sulina estuary she ran aground but was towed off by naval ferry barges F 122, 135 and 138 which put out to assist her. She put in to Bugaz at 1700.

0920 Naval ferry barges Nos. 132 and 143 put in to Bugaz from Skadovsk. They intend to continue to Galatz on 16 May.

South Russian Area:

0700 Mine-exploding vessel No. 191 again checked the area around the island of Pervomeisk. One mine was swept in 46° 35.2' N, 31° 35.4' E.

Crimea:

Radio location apparatus (Crimea I) arrived at Cape Ili and was set up.

General:

Operations Staff - 1st, 3rd and 4th Admiral's Staff Officers with their staffs and communications personnel - was transferred to Eforia near Constantza. I intend to visit them tomorrow with Chief of Staff to coordinate the Rumanian, Italian and German naval forces and draw up plans for operations.

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Land Situation:

The enemy is still putting up a desperate resistance in various bases in the northeastern part of Kerch Peninsula to cover their embarkations at the few remaining ports. Their resistance has been broken down everywhere and they are confined in a very narrow area. The destruction of the remaining enemy groups is almost complete.

No special incidents in the coastal area of 1st Army H.Q. (Tanks). Operations Division will be transferred to Stalino on 16 May. Naval Liaison Officer will however remain temporarily in Mariupol.

(Signed) Fleischer.

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APPENDIX I

Admiral, Black Sea

12 May, 1942.

Serial No. Gkdos. 1551 A.Op.

Most Secret

To:

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine - Nikolaiev,
Naval Shore Commander, Crimea - Simferopol,
Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol - Mail Office,
Group Lex - Skadovsk.

Copy to:

Naval Group Command, South - Sofia,
Naval Special Duties Detachment, Rumania - Constantza,
Danube Flotilla - Galatz,
Naval Port Commander, Nikolaiev - Nikolaiev,
Naval Port Commander, Ak Mechet - Ak Mechet,
Naval Port Commander, Skadovsk - Skadovsk,
Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force - Nikolaiev.

Subject: Ochakov - Skadovsk - Ak Mechet sea route.
No preamble.

- A. The route from Ochakov to Skadovsk and a subsidiary route to Ak Mechet and a protected anchorage southeast of Tendra lighthouse are to be checked for moored mines as soon as possible.
- B. Orders:
1. The 2 naval ferry barges from Group Lex which have been detailed to Galatz after laying mines off Klarovka will take in equipment in Galatz including fuel for Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol (16th Harbor Defense Flotilla).
 2. Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol will then proceed with the 2 naval ferry barges from Galatz, if necessary in stages, to Ochakov. Command: Commander, Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol.
 3. On arrival in Ochakov, the formation will be operationally subordinate to Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine.
 4. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will be responsible for the execution of task A by the formation.

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C. Directions for the execution of task A:

1. Using motor pinnace gear, Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol will check an anchorage of about 0.6 square miles southeast of Tendra lighthouse and an approach route to this anchorage (diversionary route from that in C.2.).

a. Position of the anchorage:

46° 21' N, 31° 33' E
46° 21' N, 31° 34' E
46° 20.3' N, 31° 34' E
46° 20.3' N, 31° 33' E.

b. Approach route:

From 46° 23' N, 31° 26' E
via 46° 23' N, 31° 32.3' E
to 46° 21' N, 31° 33.5' E.

2. Using motor pinnace gear, the flotilla will then sweep the route from Ochakov to Skadovsk.

Route:

From 46° 35' N, 31° 15.5' E
via 46° 32.4' N, 31° 14' E
via 46° 21.6' N, 31° 27.9' E
via 46° 15.5' N, 31° 31' E
via 46° 12' N, 31° 37' E
via 46° 1.5' N, 32° 33' E
via 45° 59.6' N, 32° 55' E
via 45° 59.6' N, 33° 0.0' E
via 46° 0.7' N, 33° 5.3' E
via 46° 3' N, 33° 5.5' E
via Skadovsk approach buoy to Skadovsk.

3. After the execution of task C.2., Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol will sweep the diversionary route to Ak Mechet.

Route:

From 45° 59.6' N, 32° 55' E
via 45° 38' N, 32° 43.3' E
to Ak Mechet.

4. The points of diversion of the above 2 routes and the corners of the anchorage are to be marked by buoys. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will ensure that the necessary buoys are ready in Ochakov.
5. During the execution of tasks C.2. and C.3., the 2 naval ferry barges will follow Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol along the swept channel.

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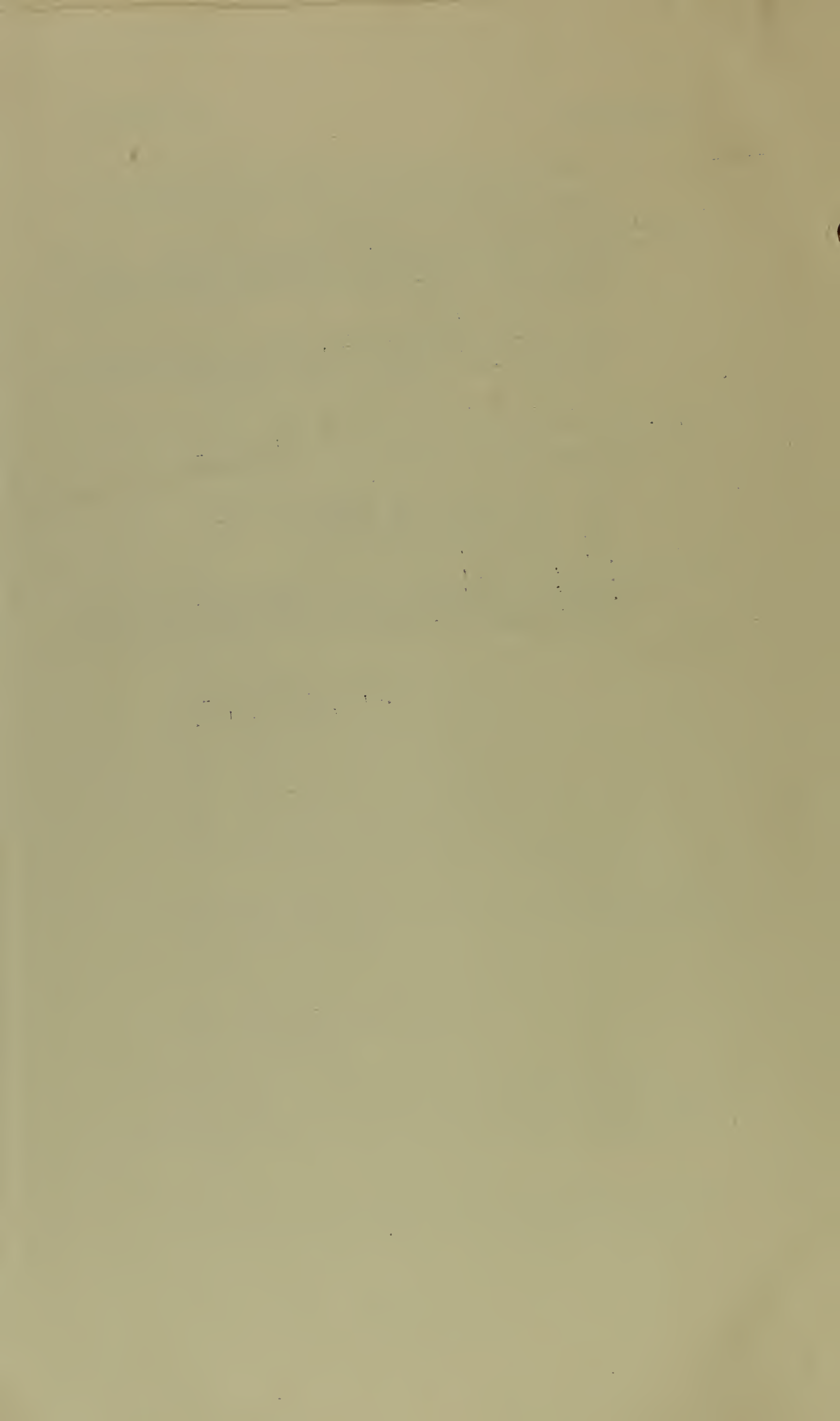
6. After execution of the tasks, Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol and the naval ferry barges will put in to Ak Mechet.
7. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will issue further orders to Harbor Defense Flotilla, Sevastopol (with copy to Admiral, Black Sea and Naval Shore Commander, Crimea).
8. Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine will inform all the competent offices of the formation's movements.

D. For information:

1. German minefields are to be expected:

From 46° 8.2' N, 32° 12' E
to 46° 6.5' N, 32° 12' E
to 46° 1.6' N, 32° 35' E
to 46° 3.6' N, 32° 35' E.

2. Between the eastern tip of Dzhariulgach and the northern tip of Bakalskaya Bank there is a minefield stretching north to 46° 0.4' N, 33° 4.7' E.



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APPENDIX II

Naval Group Command, South Ops.

5 June, 1942.

Comments on the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea
1 - 15 May, 1942

Re "Bulgarian Area", 1 May:

Withdrawal of German anti-aircraft guns from the Bulgarian area:

The lack of anti-aircraft forces in the Army, Navy and Air Force compels us to concentrate the guns in one area. At the present stage of hostilities, the Bulgarian area is of secondary importance.

Re "Own Situation", 2 May:

Anti-submarine measures:

The problem of dealing with enemy submarines is a question of burning importance. Our forces are inadequate and the possibility of obtaining suitable vessels is remote. Knowing the difficulties of overland transportation, the enemy will increase their submarine attacks on our sea supply routes as the German land operations progress. Reinforced air escorts can to a certain extent make up for our few submarine chasers, but the number of planes available will depend on the air commitments for land operations.

Re "General", 12 May:

Subordination of Coastal Defense Flotilla to 11th Army H.Q.:

I again pointed out that in accordance with Führer Directive No. 40 the responsibility for operations by naval forces should in each case rest with the competent naval authority. Until Sevastopol falls, the transfer of naval ferry barges from the western Black Sea past Sevastopol to the eastern Crimea can only be carried out in extreme emergencies. The armed motor fishing vessels in the Sea of Azov have been found unsuitable for the planned support of the Army operations.

Re "South Russian Area", 13 May:

I consider that, in addition to the 50 UMA mines, 50 FMB mines must have been meant and not FMC mines.

Otherwise no comments.

(Signed) Schuster.



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Security Information

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Security Information