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UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY  
OF  
ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

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16 MAY, 1943-31 MAY, 1943

PG NUMBER 31532

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

1955

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OFFICE OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Editorial Note:

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

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

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

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16 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

During the night, Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 1 transport heading for the beachhead and at 0330 1 small vessel making off from the beachhead to the southeast.

In moderate visibility, no enemy traffic was detected by daylight air reconnaissance in the southeastern Black Sea. Visibility was good over the central and north Caucasus coast, but here also no shipping was detected. Of all the ports, only Ghelcnjik was examined. There was a strikingly high number of ships there, including 10 coastal vessels and lighters totaling 3,000 tons, 7 motor minesweepers, 7 M.T.B.s and 50 small boats. Owing to bad visibility with dust clouds, Tuapse could not be examined.

Observation of the ports on the Sea of Azov revealed nothing of importance. No boat traffic was detected.

No night reconnaissance was flown owing to fog. At 0855 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located 1 destroyer off Tuapse and 2 submarines in the western Black Sea and the east coast area.

Own Situation:

Owing to unfavorable weather, the night passed without any German or enemy operations.

0400

Naval Port Commander, Sevastopol reported a large fire in the dockyard. A storehouse of the Naval Construction Office had caught fire. Apart from construction material, gasoline and oxygen bottles were also stored there. The cause of the fire is not known. It was efficiently tackled by the fire brigade and soldiers of the Naval Port Commander, who had the flames under control by 0500 and extinguished by 0600.

A convoy consisting of 3 freight towing vessels, 2 tanker lighters, 1 lighter, 4 motor minesweepers (RA), 3 motor minesweepers, mine-exploding vessel No. 192 and "Grafenau" put out to the east from Sevastopol as ordered in the morning. At 1430 it put in to Sevastopol again owing to the weather. Freight towing vessel "Hainburg" ran aground in fog and her hull was slightly damaged.

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Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: Wind mainly S, force 5 - 7, fair to cloudy, fog in patches, visibility 10 miles.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea intended to send the "Charkov" convoy from Constantza to Sevastopol on 17 May and requested my consent because of the urgent need to supply the Crimea. This measure would be contrary to my directive issued after the "Succeava" incident, namely not to dispatch these precious steamer convoys on bright moonlit nights (see War Diary 7 May). I could not approve the running of this convoy because I expected that, after their success in sinking "Succeava" on 20 April during the full moon period, the enemy would again dispose large numbers of submarines this week. It would have been more suitable to send the "Charkov" convoy some days earlier to avoid any hold-up of supplies. In view of the scarcity of shipping in the Black Sea, the risk of sailing 2 days before full moon cannot be accepted. In answer to an inquiry from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, I confirmed that this order affected the 3 large ships and tanker "Celeno" only, not the smaller ships such as "Tisza", "Kassa" and "Lola".

In their recent operations, the 3 naval gunnery lighters expended almost their entire stock of 8.8 cm. ammunition in warding off frequent air raids. As further ammunition supplies aboard steamer "Charkov" seemed certain to be late owing to the postponement of the convoy (see above), Naval Ordnance Arsenal and Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea were directed to transfer the ammunition at once to naval ferry barges F 492 and F 493 in Kerch and to send the barges to Sevastopol without delay.

On board naval gunnery lighters Nos. 2 and 3 which arrived in Kerch yesterday, there was water in the pontoons just as in naval gunnery lighter No. 1 (see War Diary 15 May). The leakage could not be fully explained; possibly it was not the result of bombing, but merely due to tiny leaks in the hatch cover.

Commander, 3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla was ordered to transfer naval gunnery lighter No. 1 also to Kerch with the next naval ferry barges putting out from Theodosia and to have her leaks quickly repaired in the dockyard there.

1030 Naval ferry barges F 170 and F 316 which were on passage from Yalta to Theodosia were attacked by

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a submarine. Two torpedoes with shallow depth setting passed under F 170 in the region of the bower anchor davit. 8 depth charges were dropped, apparently without success.

I cannot oblige 17th Army H.Q. today by repeating the E-boat attack on the Myshako bridgehead. Such an operation promises no success during the present moon phase. Full moon falls on 19 May and the moon does not set until 0242. I therefore decided instead to employ 4 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla in patrol line at right angles to the coast between Cape Idokopas and Cape Olginskaya.

The necessary orders were sent to 1st E-Boat Flotilla with special instructions to deploy the most northerly boat in the patrol line in the immediate vicinity of the coast.

- 1820 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported from Ivan Baba that the boats could not put out as the weather had not improved and, in particular, the wind was still high.
- 1930 Coastal defense vessels put out from Temriuk for patrol duty on both sides of the Kuban estuary.

Enemy Air Activity:

During the night of 15/16 May, the enemy heavily bombed the harbors and loading places in the Kuban bridgehead. Senaya and Taman were attacked at 2300, 0100 and 0200 by several waves of planes. Further reports have not yet come in. Anapa was attacked 14 times between 2000 and 0200, 13 bombs were dropped, no damage.

Enemy planes dropped 30 flares and 15 high-explosive bombs on the southern sector of Novorossisk. Naval Port Commander also reported artillery and mortar bombardment of the site at the east harbor, the southern sector and the town.

Additional report: On both 12 and 13 May, 1 man belonging to Naval Port Command 16 was wounded.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

The southern route in Kerch Strait was again swept east of the line of buoys with single width towed loop gear (K). No mines swept. Three harbor defense boats were employed in sweeping for moored mines on the route to Senaya.

Five minesweeping planes swept the Kerch Strait-Temriuk route. The group with skid gear did not operate because new motor generators were being installed in the boats.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait proceeded as scheduled in favorable weather.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoys Nos. 84 and 85, comprising 3 and 4 naval ferry barges respectively, ran as scheduled. Convoy No. 86 put out for Anapa at 1730.

c. In the Kerch-Temriuk traffic, convoy No. 19 ran as scheduled. Tug "Braunkohle 8" which was damaged in a storm on 15 May (see War Diary 15 May) returned with it to Kerch. Tug "Baden 16" was employed in the Genichesk-Temriuk traffic in her place. At 1200 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 13 put out from Temriuk to return to Genichesk with 4 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and 1 lighter.

At 1500, convoy No. 14 which had put out from Genichesk at 1140 returned to Genichesk owing to fog.

d. Convoys off the Crimean coast were impeded by strong wind and local fog. Owing to fog, the convoy of freight towing vessels, tugs and lighters on passage to the east from Sevastopol returned to Sevastopol at 1430.



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17 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In moderate visibility, air reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast detected the following ships:

At 0912 1 small armed vessel, course northwest, and at 0913 1 motor minesweeper, stopped, in the Ghelenjik area; at 0931 3 small armed vessels, course southeast, 15 miles southeast of Tuapse; at 0935 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast, in the Sochi area; at 0944 1 coastal vessel and 1 patrol vessel, course northwest, 5 miles south of Sochi; at 1506 1 coastal vessel and 2 patrol vessels, course southeast, 5 miles south of Gagri; at 1040 2 freighters, each 800-1,000 tons and 1 coastal vessel of 500 tons with 3 escort vessels south of Sukhum. As visibility was reduced by a high fog over the north Caucasus coast, all the traffic in the Ghelenjik-Tuapse area was probably not detected.

The following enemy ships were observed in port:

Ghelenjik at 0911: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons and 6 coastal vessels.

Tuapse at 0928: 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,600 tons.

Sochi at 0943: no ships.

Sukhum at 1040 (partially covered by clouds):

1 torpedoboat, 2 motor minesweepers, 3 minesweepers, 1 gunboat, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 2 freighters, each 800 tons, 1 tug and 20 boats.

Ochemchiri at 1040: 7 submarines, 2 M.T.B.s, 7 motor minesweepers, both the submarine tenders and 3 coastal vessels totaling 1,000 tons.

Poti at 1035 (probably incomplete because of oblique view): 1 battleship, 1 heavy cruiser, 1 accommodation ship of 9,000 tons, 3 freighters, each 4,000 tons.

No boats were detected in the Sea of Azov.

Enemy shipping in the ports showed no important changes.

Owing to fog, night reconnaissance was not flown.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected no large surface vessels by radio inference, but reported increasing activity of small vessels and patrol vessels in the east coast area. At 1826 1 submarine was located 40 miles west of Ghelenjik. The submarine which was reported on 14 and 15 May off the south coast of the Crimea

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was detected at 1900 on return passage approximately 50 miles north of Trabzon. Two submarines were detected in the northeastern Black Sea and 2 in the southeastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

0145 "Ship 19" put out from Sevastopol for anti-submarine operations between Eupatoria and Cape Tarkhan. She had orders to pick up and escort the "Kassa" convoy which was coming from Sulina.

0530 One naval ferry barge and 4 boats which were employed in the patrol line on both the sides of the Kuban estuary put in to Temriuk again. No air activity observed, no incidents.

Naval gunnery lighter No. 1, which returned to Theodosia owing to leakage in her pontoons, put out for Kerch at 0600 with the navigational assistance of 2 naval ferry barges which were carrying wood from Yalta to Kerch. I intend to transfer one of the 3 naval gunnery lighters to Temriuk on 18 May and to subordinate her to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus for operations. With the boats already available, she will perform coastal defense duties northeast of the Kuban estuary at night. After discovering that naval gunnery lighters Nos. 2 and 3 had similar leakages, Commander, 3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla received the following orders:

1. On 18 May, naval gunnery lighter No. 2 will be transferred to Temriuk with pilot.
2. Before then, all 8.8 cm. ammunition aboard the 3 naval gunnery lighters should be transferred to naval gunnery lighter No. 2.
3. The leakages in the other 2 naval gunnery lighters should be quickly repaired and then naval gunnery lighter No. 2 should be attended to.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Northwestern Black Sea: N winds, force 6, squally, cloudy, periodic showers, visibility 6 - 8 miles.

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: S winds, force 5 - 6, abating in the evening, cloudy to overcast, local fog and high fog, visibility 4 - 7 miles, temperature at night 14<sup>o</sup> C.

It is doubtful if E-boats can operate in this weather. If at all possible, I should like them to make the attempt because the enemy will not

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expect any operations in view of the weather and will most likely run heavy coastal traffic in the evening when the wind abates. For that reason, the increased strain on the boats and crews during passage must be accepted. I intend to reserve my decision until I learn the afternoon forecast.

1st E-Boat Flotilla was therefore ordered to operate against enemy supplies between Idokopas and Cape Olginskaya, as had been intended on the night of 16/17 May. (The latter operation was canceled because of the weather.) The boats were not to sail until the codeword was passed. As the afternoon weather forecast predicted decreasing wind in the evening, 4 boats of the flotilla put out at 1600.

Today I ordered 2 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla (the Crimea group) to be subordinated directly to me to ensure a clear distinction between the motor minesweepers available for convoy duties and the Crimea group. These boats will be chosen by Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla himself and any exchanges will also be his responsibility. He will have to ensure that the boats of the Crimea group are always at full readiness and equipped with 3.7 cm. guns. All the other operational boats of the flotilla will be operationally subordinated to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea for escort and minesweeping tasks. This also applies to new boats joining the flotilla.

Boat D 6 of the Danube Flotilla, which was on passage from Sulina to Odessa with other escort vessels, had to stop 12 miles south of Bugaz today because of engine trouble. She was later salvaged by motor minesweeper R 164 and towed in to Sulina.

2015 The 4 boats and naval ferry barge F 401 which had put out at 1930 for patrol duties returned because of WSW winds, force 6 - 7 and rough sea.

Enemy Air Activity:

No enemy attacks on convoys, transports or ports in the course of the day.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight bombardment of the site at the east harbor, otherwise nothing to report.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued as scheduled. Two FZ-groups were employed, one in the southern

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entrance to Kerch Strait and the other off the entrance to Genichesk. The area in Kerch Strait was swept four times, the Genichesk area once. No mines were swept. After the generators had been installed, the group with skid gear twice swept an area north of the line of buoys on the Kerch Strait-Temriuk route. The same route was covered four times by minesweeping planes on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

The search for the wreck of the minesweeping plane (Ju) which crashed north of Cape Achilleon was unsuccessful. Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch swept the Kerch-Senaya route for moored mines on both sides of the line of buoys. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled. Weather and traffic conditions were favorable.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 86 ran with 3 naval ferry barges. At 1635 convoy No. 87 put out from Kerch for Anapa with 4 naval ferry barges.

c. Temriuk convoys:

The second group of Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 19, comprising 4 naval ferry barges, returned to Kerch at 1850.

At 1850 convoy No. 20 put out from Kerch for Temriuk with 7 naval ferry barges. Naval gunnery lighter No. 2 joined this convoy on route for patrol duties off the Kuban estuary.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 13 ran successfully. At 1030 convoy No. 14 put out for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges.

d. Convoys in the western Black Sea were held up by the weather. Crimea convoys ran as scheduled. Five naval ferry barges of the newly established Theodosia-Taman traffic put out from Theodosia at 0440 and put in to Taman at 1400.

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18 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

According to sighting reports from Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk, 1 landing boat was proceeding in a southeasterly direction from the beachhead at 0340. At 1610 3 M.T.B.s put out from Ghelenjik, course west, followed by 3 more at 1730.

Owing to bad visibility, daylight air reconnaissance was not exhaustive. At 0915 2 small armed vessels were sighted 15 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 0934 1 coastal vessel, course northwest, off Sochi; at 0940 2 coastal vessels and 5 boats, stopped, 5 miles south of Adler; at 1000 1 small armed vessel, course southeast, in the Sukhum area; at 1003 1 coastal vessel, course southeast, 9 miles south of Sukhum; at 1009 1 coastal vessel, 2 boats and 1 tug with a 600-ton barge and 3 small barges, course southeast, 45 miles south of Ochemchiri; at 1045 1 patrol boat, course southeast, and 1 patrol boat, course northwest, 29 miles southeast of Ochemchiri.

Enemy shipping in the ports showed no important changes.

Ghelenjik at 0900: 5 coastal vessels and 30 boats.

Tuapse at 0925: 5 coastal vessels.

Ochemchiri at 1008: the submarine tenders which lie there permanently.

Owing to the weather, the other ports were not examined.

No enemy shipping was detected in the Sea of Azov. Examination of ports and berths revealed nothing of importance.

At 2220 night reconnaissance detected several small boats, course northwest, and 1 M.T.B. off Cape Myshako.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected no large surface vessels at sea. Only small vessels were located. Submarines located: 1 in the western Black Sea, 1 30 miles south of Cape Takil and 1 in the east coast area.

With reference to the Army situation, it was reported that the enemy had succeeded in a

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temporary breakthrough on the eastern front at the Gotenkopf position. We sealed them off in a counter-attack and destroyed 12 tanks. In this action we ourselves suffered considerable losses.

Own Situation:

- 0430 Naval gunnery lighter No. 2, which was to reinforce the coastal defenses on both sides of the Kuban estuary, put in to Temriuk this morning with Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 20. This means that rear cover for the boats employed in defense along the coast is ensured.
- 0510 Three new boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla (S 42, S 45 and S 46) put out from Galatz for Constantza.
- 0815 S 51, S 49, S 52 and S 26 put in to Ivan Baba from the operational area. In the patrol line off Cape Idokopas, the boats did not sight any shipping traffic or patrol vessel activity despite good visibility. In steadily increasing westerly and northwesterly winds and rough sea with a swell, the endurance of the E-boats was stretched to the limit and the crews were subjected to a great strain.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Western Black Sea: NW winds, force 6 - 7, abating, fair, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: NW winds, force 4, later increasing to force 5 - 6 and abating in the evening, overcast, showers, visibility 3 - 6 miles, reduced locally by fog, temperature at night 11° - 13° C.

In view of the superiority of the enemy forces, any development of our future operational situation in the Black Sea area makes it imperative to reinforce 1st E-Boat Flotilla now, since, apart from U-boats, E-boats are our only offensive weapons. The great increase in enemy convoy traffic in the northeastern Black Sea, the constant supplying of the enemy front near Novorossisk and the frequent appearance of enemy forces (destroyers and M.T.B.s) off our coast near Anapa, Ivan Baba and Theodosia make regular, intensive E-boat operations a necessity. These almost continuous E-boat operations mean that the boats quickly cover the maximum number of operational hours. This entails more frequent dockyard repair periods and quicker wear and tear of the boats. At best, 3 E-boats can be ready for operations out of 12 and recently there have often

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been only 4 - 5. Moreover, enemy air operations have recently been intensified at sea with modern types of ground attack planes, heavy fighters and many other fighters. Since they operate not only against our convoys but also to prevent German E-boat attacks, this may obviously lead to increased damage to boats and weapons.

I therefore urgently requested Group South today to transfer 4 more boats equipped with 4 cm. guns and radar to the Black Sea for the summer months. With the present 4 E-boats ready for operations in Ivan Baba, I cannot carry out my plan to dispose E-boats from time to time against the enemy M.T.B.s which appear off our coast (Anapa), unless I abandon the vital offensive operations against supply traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse or place too great a strain on boats and crews. I have to take this risk although Group Command expressly desires offensive operations against even the smallest enemy vessels.

The Command of the Croatian Naval Division requested that the first 2 new armed fishing vessels of 23rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla should not be employed operationally but for training purposes until at least a third vessel was ready. As the lack of escort vessels necessitates the immediate employment of each operational vessel, I could not agree to this request. I therefore ordered that after the crews had a shortened training period, the 2 armed fishing vessels should be sent to Constantza to be at the disposal of Commander, Convoys and Escorts. At the same time, I directed Commander, Convoys and Escorts to employ these boats temporarily on tasks which would allow them time for training in anti-submarine operations.

Lack of escort vessels also forced me to the following general changes in sea transportation off the west coast: According to my previous directives, all sea transports had to be escorted and protected close to the west coast north of Sulina. As enemy submarines were now concentrating on the Crimean coast instead of the west coast, westbound convoys had now relatively little to fear on that score. In these circumstances, it seemed advisable and indeed necessary to relax my previous orders, particularly since there were often too few escorts available to allow prompt allocation when convoys were to run. As this entailed loss of time and failure to use all the available shipping space, I issued the following orders:

- a. With the exception of steamer convoys, no sea transports off the west coast north of Sulina

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are to be escorted. In the case of very valuable transports, the decision lies with the Command of Rumanian Naval Forces.

- b. At least 1 escort vessel, and more if possible, must accompany all convoys to give navigational aid and to ensure radio contact. In accordance with convoy regulations, the commander of the escort boat will be in charge of the convoy.

I could not allow all vessels to proceed unescorted off the west coast for the following reasons:

First, routing and control of shipping must remain in the hands of military authorities, particularly since unescorted traffic would entail the announcement of routes, declared areas etc. to all merchant captains who are not always trustworthy. Furthermore, the navigational knowledge required for independent passage is beyond most of the crews who are trained only in river procedure and there is the particular danger of mines. Finally, convoys should be organized according to the weather as some of the vessels have no great endurance and weather conditions alter very quickly in the Black Sea. Only military authorities with their extensive organization are capable of stopping or diverting transports promptly. Commander, Sea Transportation objected to any further temporary employment of the steamer "Ardeal" in convoys from Constantza to Sevastopol because the ship's degaussing equipment was not in order and repairs could not be started until approximately 4 weeks after "PLM 16" was repaired. As the area in question is very deep, I do not share his objections. Danger from ground mines exists only inside the 30-meter line directly off Sevastopol and that fairway is constantly checked by the FZ-Group. I directed Commander, Sea Transportation today to request the FZ-Group to provide escort against ground mines 48 hours before convoys entered Sevastopol. Repairs to "Ardeal"'s degaussing equipment will be carried out after completion of "PLM 16"'s repairs.

Repeated successes of minesweeping planes off Cape Kasantip and Cape Achilleon showed that the enemy was laying a large number of non-contact mines at these obvious approach points. Probably the planes made use of the very large sea marks on the supply routes of the Sea of Azov for orientation. I therefore ordered Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to work out a plan to route shipping far from these points and to move the light buoys outside that route.



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Anapa convoys have frequently been returning without cargo recently because the naval ferry barges have to proceed from and to Kerch by day, leaving no time for reloading. Today, as Army Group A urgently requested transportation of empties from Anapa, I have changed the earliest time for passing Cape Takil from 0500 to 0400. The previous hour had been arranged to allow evaluation of the morning air reconnaissance results before the naval ferry barges put out to the open sea. As daylight is now earlier, this purpose can still be met if the vessels pass Cape Takil at 0400. Simultaneously, Army Group A was requested to have the empties ready for quick transshipment and to arrange for adequate loading and unloading labor in Anapa.

- 1550 Three naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 88 (F 470, F 373, F 326) were attacked 3 miles northwest of Anapa by an enemy submarine which fired 2 torpedoes from the landward side. Both were surface-runners and no hits were scored. Depth charges had no visible success.
- 1715 The same convoy was attacked southeast of Zhelezni Rog by 4 bombers and 4 fighters. The planes flew in at the low altitude of 100 meters, dropped 15 - 20 bombs and machine-gunned the convoy. The naval ferry barges were only damaged by splinters on the upper decks and remained fully operational. Casualties: On board F 470: 1 man seriously wounded. On board F 326: 2 men slightly wounded who were transferred to Kerch by a combined operations landing boat when the formation anchored off Janysh Takil. The anti-aircraft guns aboard the naval ferry barges probably shot down 1 plane.
- 1930 Naval gunnery lighter No. 2 and 4 boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary.
- Plans for the sailing of S 51 from Ivan Baba to Constantza for dockyard repairs this evening had to be postponed owing to the weather.
- 2120 Coastal observation post Kys Aul (8 miles west of Cape Takil) detected 2 unidentified vessels at sea some 4 miles south. The request for recognition signals was wrongly answered with a red star and a further request went unheeded. The boats then disappeared on a westerly course.
- After receiving this report at 2308, I directed 2 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla to put out to a patrol line between Cape Takil and Cape Chauda approximately 5 miles from the coast. At 2400 the boats put out from Ivan Baba.

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Enemy Air Activity:

With the exception of the above-mentioned air raid on Anapa convoy No. 88, the day passed without any enemy air activity.

Novorossisk reported mortar and artillery bombardment of sites at the east harbor, the southern sector and the center of the town.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov off Genichesk by FZ-groups with towed loop gear and a noise box (turbines). No mines swept.

Four minesweeping planes swept for ground mines between the northern entrance to Kerch Strait and Temriuk on both sides of the line of buoys; they covered the area 4 times to a width of 400 meters but swept no mines.

Minesweeping commenced in the same area by the group with skid gear was broken off owing to engine trouble aboard motor minesweeper FR 7.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 87 ran as scheduled with 4 naval ferry barges.

The 3 naval ferry barges of convoy No. 88 anchored off Janysh Takil on return passage. With the exception of the above-mentioned air raid on convoy No. 88, transportation ran as scheduled.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1920 the first group of Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 20, which put out on 17 May with 5 naval ferry barges, put in to Kerch on return passage. The other 2 barges did not put out from Temriuk until 1630 and then they anchored in the northern entrance to Kerch Strait. Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 14 is on return passage to Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges. Convoy No. 15 is on passage from Genichesk to Temriuk.

d. Crimea convoys:

Planned transfer of the freight towing vessels, tugs and lighters from Sevastopol to Theodosia and Kerch had to be postponed for 24 hours because of the weather.

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19 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

At 0300 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 2 M.T.B.s, course northwest.

Throughout the day, in moderate visibility, the Air Force reconnoitered as far as Batum. The following ships were sighted: at 0952 3 patrol vessels off Ghelenjik and 1 motor minesweeper off the entrance to Tuapse; at 0938 1 motor minesweeper, course northwest, and 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast, 5 miles west of Tuapse; at 0935 1 motor minesweeper and 1 patrol vessel, lying stopped, 10 miles south of Tuapse; at 0935 1 motor minesweeper and 1 patrol vessel, lying stopped, 10 miles south of Tuapse; at 0925 2 motor minesweepers 20 miles southeast of Tuapse; at 0920 1 coastal vessel of 500 tons, course southwest, 5 miles west of Adler; at 0857 1 motor minesweeper, course south, 5 miles south of Sukhum; at 0830 1 destroyer, course southeast, 30 miles southwest of Gudauty.

Owing to unfavorable weather, the ports could only be partially examined.

Ghelenjik at 0952: 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 tons, 2 motor minesweepers and 40 - 50 boats.

Tuapse at 0936: 5 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons (small vessels were not detected because only parts of the harbor were examined).

Sochi at 0922: some boats.

Sukhum at 0900: 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 2 motor minesweepers and 15 small boats.

Air reconnaissance in the Sea of Azov detected no shipping. No changes in shipping in harbors and fisheries.

At 2245 night air reconnaissance detected a small vessel 30 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, at 2150 1 coastal vessel 5 miles northwest of Sochi and at 2200 1 small vessel southwest of Sochi.

In the evening the Myshako mountain and Novorossisk stations reported sighting 16 vessels, including 2 steamers of 1,500 and 1,000 tons, 9 lighters and several tugs, proceeding from Ghelenjik to an assembly area which seemed to be 10 miles south of Ghelenjik. Investigation of

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these reports brought no confirmation of the presence of these vessels either in port or at sea. Presumably, the size of the vessels employed in the traffic to the beachhead was overestimated because their types were unknown. Naval Liaison Officer to 17th Army H.Q. was therefore directed to stop these false reports. It was not quite out of the question that these vessels might have put out for training in landing operations. According to agents' reports, that type of exercise was said to have been carried out fairly frequently in the vicinity of Ghelenjik, but at any rate the size of the vessels (steamers) had been overestimated compared with the reports of the Air Force.

From radio traffic, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected no activity of large surface vessels. Submarines detected: 2 in the western Black Sea as far as the Crimean coast and 2 in the east coast area.

Attacks on the Army front are expected to continue. The enemy forces which penetrated yesterday near Nebershayevskaya were finally sealed off and enemy concentrations efficiently destroyed by the Air Force and artillery.

Own Situation:

- 0430 Four boats and naval gunnery lighter No. 2 which were employed on patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary put in to Temriuk. No incidents, no enemy air activity observed.
- 0450 S 52 and S 49 which put out from Ivan Baba at 0000 to patrol the area between Cape Chauda and Cape Takil put in again at 0450. The boats sighted no enemy forces from the patrol line.
- 0520 The convoy consisting of "Baikal", "Engerau", lighter No. 1466, tanker lighters "Netty" and "Elbe 5", mine-exploding vessel No. 192, "Grafenau", 2 motor minesweepers and 4 motor minesweepers (RA) put out from Sevastopol this morning for Kerch. Shortly after leaving, the motor minesweepers (RA) swept a new Russian inertia contact mine. On 14 May, the boats had had 3 mines in their gear when they entered with the floating dock convoy (see War Diary 14 May).

On receipt of this report, I at once closed route Brown from Sevastopol to Yalta and ordered Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast to have the route from Sevastopol to Cape Khersonese swept immediately by motor minesweepers and boats of the harbor defense flotilla lying in Sevastopol. 15-meter pendants were to be used and an area 1,000 meters wide was to be searched.

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At 1115 motor minesweepers R 37 and R 209 put out from Sevastopol and swept 4 more inertia contact mines at 1755 in 44° 37.7' N, 33° 27' E. The mines lay 50 meters apart, bearing 220°. The area was swept 4 more times without result. Minesweeping will be continued on 20 May.

0610

Anapa convoy No. 89, comprising naval ferry barges F 126, F 14, F 309 and F 367, was bombed and machine-gunned by 7 - 8 bombers while proceeding between Cape Zhelezni Rog and Maria Magdalena Bank to Anapa. The attack was first made in close formation from the low altitude of 100 meters, then the planes attacked singly from all directions, dropping 80 - 100 small bombs and also employing machine-guns and other guns. Barges F 309 and F 367, carrying ammunition and guns, were hit by 10 - 15 bombs and sank after their ammunition cargo had exploded. The crews were rescued by F 126 and F 144. Bomb splinters damaged F 126 below the waterline. The crew's living quarters were flooded but pumps prevented larger intake of water. F 144 was not damaged.

F 367 shot down 1 plane, scoring a direct hit with her 7.5 cm. gun. Another plane was shot down by 2 cm. gunfire from the barges. A third plane was probably shot down, as it was observed to be on fire as it flew off to the south.

Casualties: 2 men seriously wounded (1 man aboard F 309 and 1 belonging to 9th Anti-Aircraft Division). The attack lasted 25 minutes. After the attack, F 126 and F 144 returned to Kerch.

Air raids on Anapa convoys have been carried out more and more frequently within the last few days. The particular energy shown yesterday and today indicates that the enemy has recognized the importance of this supply route and is making every effort to restrict its use. We may expect the raids to continue in the near future. As long as the convoys run by day, planes and then submarines will attack them. Attacks by surface forces are not very likely as the naval ferry barges sail most of the way under cover of shore batteries and the enemy would have to reckon with our daylight air reconnaissance. Armament of the ferry barges should be adequate against M.T.B. attacks by day. As the situation on the Army front made it difficult to provide adequate fighter escort for Anapa convoys, we had to decide whether it would be more suitable to run these convoys at night. Despite the advantage of no danger from the air, I am against night passage because then the

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naval ferry barges would be exposed to the M.T.B.s which had already been frequently observed in this area. Moreover, attacks by large surface vessels must be expected and the navigational equipment of most of the barges is not adequate to ensure safe passage at night, considering our own minefields in Kerch Strait and the enemy minefields off Anapa. If all Anapa traffic were changed to night passage, the double voyage would take 2 nights even in summer. The barges would have to remain in Anapa for a whole day causing unnecessary delay of the entire traffic and, quite apart from the fact that fighter escort would be just as necessary then as now during passage by day, the available tonnage could not be nearly so well exploited.

I therefore intend for the present to keep to day passage. Today, I requested fighter escort and close protection against submarines from 1st Air Corps. In order to facilitate the duties of the fighter escort and at the same time increase our defenses against air raids, the 2 daily transports of 3 and 4 naval ferry barges will be combined into one convoy of 7 barges. As the mole in Anapa now allows simultaneous unloading of 5 naval ferry barges at the most, immediate minesweeping and enlarging of the mole will be necessary. Army Group A was requested to begin this work at once. Until completion, daily Anapa convoys will consist of only 5 naval ferry barges.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Western Black Sea: W - NW winds, force 2 - 3, freshening in the afternoon to force 4, cloudy, light local showers, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: Winds mainly S, force 2 - 3, increasing to force 5 in the afternoon with sea wind, later veering N to NW, force 4, fair to cloudless, visibility above 10 miles, temperature at night 12° - 13° C.

I have directed U 9 to the area between Adler and Cape Pitsunda for her next operation. Sailing is planned for 20 May. Approach via the southern route.

1st E-Boat Flotilla, which had only 2 boats operating for a short time west of Kerch Strait last night, was ordered to operate against enemy supply traffic on the night of 19/20 May. Two boats were to be in the area between Tuapse and Cape Idokopas and 2 in the area southeast of Tuapse. If the weather is favorable, the group of boats in the south should extend operations

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as far as Sochi and Adler. They will then be able to intercept the enemy traffic to the northwest before daybreak, since, according to experience, most vessels do not enter the area northwest of Sochi until after dawn. In unfavorable weather, these boats should operate between Tuapse and Cape Uchdere.

1st Air Corps was requested to employ Lichtenstein planes over the Caucasus coast to cooperate with the E-boats.

1340 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that the southern group (S 72 and S 49) had put out from Ivan Baba at 1330 and the northern group (S 52 and S 26) at 1530.

2100 S 51 which had put out for Constantza at 0930 for dockyard repairs arrived in Constantza at 2100.

With the exception of the heavy attack on Anapa convoy No. 89, the enemy neither attacked at sea nor in the coastal area today.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued as scheduled. The FZ-group which was employed in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait searched the area east of the line of buoys four times. No mines swept.

The part of the route from Kerch to Temriuk in Kerch Strait was swept by Harbor Defense Flotilla, Kerch, while the route from Cape Fonar as far as north of Kuchugury was swept by the group with skid gear and the area off Temriuk by harbor defense boats lying in Temriuk. All the areas were covered several times. No mines were swept.

Four minesweeping planes also swept the route from the northern entrance to Kerch Strait as far as north of Kuchugury eight times to a width of 400 meters. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 90 ran as scheduled with 3 naval ferry barges. The vessels put in to Kerch at 2010 on return passage. Convoy No. 89 was discontinued after the above-mentioned air raid in which naval ferry barges F 309 and F 367 were sunk. For details, see above.

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c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1800 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 21 put out from Temriuk with 5 naval ferry barges.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 15 is on return passage to Genichesk.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled without incident.

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20 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

At 2355 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported 2 large vessels making off to the southeast from the landing place.

In moderate visibility the following traffic was detected by daylight air reconnaissance over the Caucasus coast:

At 0850 2 patrol vessels off Ghelenjik; at 1325 1 merchant ship of 800 tons and 5 escort boats, course northwest, 5 miles west of Sochi; at 1335 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 coastal vessel, 1 minesweeper, 1 M.T.B., 2 motor minesweepers and 1 patrol vessel, course northwest, 5 miles northwest of Sochi; at 1322 1 M.T.B., course southeast, off Adler; 1 M.T.B. lying stopped, 30 miles southwest of Ochemchiri; at 1340 1 patrol vessel 35 miles west of Poti.

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik at 0850: 2 freighters, 800 tons and 600 tons respectively, 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 tons, and approximately 50 boats.  
Tuapse at 1337: 8 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons, 6 M.T.B.s, 2 motor minesweepers, 1 torpedoboat, 1 small armed vessel, 15 boats and 1 floating crane.  
Sochi at 1323: 2 coastal vessels totaling 800 tons, and 3 motor minesweepers. No other ports were examined owing to the weather.

No night reconnaissance was flown because of unfavorable weather.

No enemy shipping was observed in the Sea of Azov. One tug, 1 motor minesweeper and 80 small boats were lying in Primorsko Akhtari. No changes in shipping in the other ports.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza did not detect any activity of heavy surface forces. Submarines detected: 2 in the western Black Sea as far as the Crimean coast and 2 in the area off the Caucasus coast.

Own Situation:

0430 Naval gunnery lighter No. 2 and other patrol vessels put in to port from patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary. Nothing to report. No enemy air activity observed.

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At 0205 the convoy of freight towing vessels which, escorted by 2 motor minesweepers and 4 motor minesweepers (RA), was on passage to Kerch, was unsuccessfully attacked by an enemy submarine west of Cape Chauda. Depth charges were dropped, no results observed. At 0645 the same convoy was bombed off Kys Aul; no damage, effect of ship's guns not observed. The convoy then continued passage and was abreast of signal station Kys Aul at 0700. At 0800 it passed Cape Takil.

0750 S 52 and S 26, which had been operating north of Tuapse, put in to Ivan Baba from the operational area. From 2130 to 0130 the boats lay in wait northwest of Tuapse. At 2324 1 small vessel, probably a minesweeper, was attacked with 2 torpedoes but the boat outmaneuvered both. No supply traffic was encountered. On return passage, the boats were continuously bombed and machine-gunned by ground attack planes, heavy fighters and fighters from 0200. One man was killed on board S 26. One plane was probably shot down but this could not be confirmed because of the darkness and the continuous raids. From 0340 to 0430, the boats were again machine-gunned and bombed by 5 planes; approximately 10 bombs were dropped. One man was seriously wounded on board S 26.

Immediately after I received the first report of these air raids, I requested fighter escort from 1st Air Corps for the E-boats. They could not give support at once because the E-boats were still outside the radius of action of the fighters, but from 0600 the fighter escort was in position.

The other two boats, S 72 and S 49, advanced as far as Sochi in favorable weather. At 2130 they attacked a towed convoy with 2 lighters which was escorted by 1 patrol vessel. With a double torpedo shot, S 72 sank 1 lighter of 600 tons. In a further attack with 1 torpedo, S 49 sank a coastal vessel of 500 tons which was lying in Sochi roads. The attacks were made during spirited gunfire from the patrol vessel and accurate fire from the shore batteries. In a further attack on the towed convoy, the E-boats were repulsed by searchlights and fire from the shore batteries and patrol vessels. In a third attack at 2336, which also took place under fire from the shore batteries, S 72 fired 1 torpedo which missed owing to failure of the lighting in the tube sights and bad aiming.

These energetic attacks deserve full acknowledgment.

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On return passage, the boats were themselves attacked by 8 - 10 ground attack planes from 0457 to 0515. Each plane dropped 4 - 6 high-explosive bombs and 30 - 40 fragmentation bombs in bundles of 15 to 20. The boats were also machine-gunned and shelled with guns of 3 - 4 cm. caliber.

Damage:

On board S 49: 2 engines, electric mains, bilge connections, air plant and radio apparatus out of order. Approximately 60 shots penetrated the boat, flooding in compartment No. 5.

On board S 72: electric mains out of order. Approximately 15 2 cm. shells penetrated the boat.

Casualties:

S 49: 1 man killed, 3 men wounded.

S 72: 5 men slightly wounded.

Two planes were shot down by the E-boats' anti-aircraft guns.

By using parts of the damaged engines, the third engine on board S 49 was kept in operation so that the boats were able to continue return passage at speeds varying between 7 and 14 knots. As they were too far out to sea for fighter escort, I requested heavy fighters which arrived at about 0800.

At 0900 S 52, with Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla aboard, sailed to support this group. She met S 72 and S 49 at 1130. Owing to bad weather with rough seas up to force 5 from a northerly direction, return passage was extremely difficult and the damaged boats did not enter Ivan Baba until 1600. S 72 and S 49 are not at operational readiness.

On receipt of the first reports on S 49's damage, I decided to have more boats ready to support her if necessary. I therefore directed Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, who was standing on and off with R 35 and R 30 off Cape Takil ready to escort a convoy, to return to Theodosia at once. The motor minesweepers turned about at 0900 in the southern part of Kerch Strait near Janysh Takil and put in to Theodosia at 1200, while the convoy was escorted by the group commander of the motor minesweepers (RA). From 1230 the motor minesweepers were ordered to immediate readiness for support of the E-boats and at 1400 were ordered to give them anti-submarine protection.

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Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: N - NW winds, force 4, locally increasing to force 5, cloudy, overcast in the east with showers, visibility 4 - 8 miles, temperature at night 8° - 10° C.

1330 U 9 put out from Constantza for operations via the southern route.

2000 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast reported 3 more mines swept during further check sweeps on route Brown between Sevastopol and Cape Khersonese. Yesterday and today, 8 inertia contact mines have been swept and destroyed by gunfire. The route was swept free six times to a width of 1,000 meters by motor minesweepers R 37 and R 209.

When it was then assumed that any other mines must lie outside the swept channel, I permitted traffic on the Sevastopol - Yalta route today at 2000.

On receipt of my order to restrict the use of escort vessels for convoys off the west coast (see War Diary 18 May), Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that he considered a minimum of 4 escort vessels (leading boat, rear boat and 2 liaison vessels) necessary for a towed convoy. He pointed out that any one of the escort vessels might break down (see example of D 6 of Danube Flotilla in War Diary 17 May). After examining his case, I replied that the restriction on the vessels had to be upheld in view of the few escort forces available. In special cases, the number of vessels necessary would depend on the size and kind of convoy and the decision would rest with Commander, Convoys and Escorts.

2240 A report was received from the Reinforced Coast-guard Control Service, Alushta, stating that at 2140 a large vessel was sighted proceeding from east to west some 15 km. from the coast. At 2247 the vessel was shelled by Army coastal batteries, but no results were observed. At 2327 the same vessel was sighted 15 km. off the coast between Alushta and Sudak on the same course. As a result of this report, the boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla in Ivan Baba were ordered to immediate readiness. From 2348 to 0008, the vessel, which was later recognized as a destroyer, was shelled by Battery Ivan Baba, Naval Gunnery Detachment 601, which fired 11 rounds. Range 2,000 to 2,600 meters, no hits observed. Surprisingly, the enemy did not reply to our fire

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and disappeared on a southeasterly course. According to a report from Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza, she was 60 miles south of Theodosia at 0145.

It was a pity that the first sighting report was not received until 2240 and that the vessel was not immediately recognized as a destroyer. As a result, the E-boats were not ready to leave until 0040, when the destroyer had already covered 30 miles to the southeast. The boats did not pursue her because of the unfavorable full moon and visibility of 20 km.

On an unusually bright night like this, E-boats could only have operated from a lurking position behind an artificial smoke screen put up by the boats themselves. This kind of operation will be prepared for should such a situation occur in the future.

This incident confirmed that on bright nights convoy traffic will have to be suspended absolutely. It was merely a question of good luck that the destroyer which was shelled from Ivan Baba at 2400 did not meet the naval ferry barges as they proceeded on route Brown from the east to put in to Theodosia at 0100 (F 211, F 394, F 521).

Possibly enemy air reconnaissance reported the reduction in the speed of S 72 and S 49 and, on the basis of that report, this destroyer may have been detailed to meet them after dark before they put in to Ivan Baba.

Enemy Air Activity:

Enemy air raids were today restricted to the above-mentioned large-scale operation against the returning E-boats and the attack on the Crimea convoy off Kys Aul. No ports or loading places were attacked.

Novorossisk reported artillery and mortar bombardment of the site at the east harbor and the southern sector. Five bombs were also dropped on the southern sector.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping was continued with double width of gear cast of the line of buoys in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. The area was covered four times, no mines swept.

Owing to the weather, the group with skid gear abandoned operations northeast of Kerch Strait.

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Four minesweeping planes again swept the Kerch-Temriuk route from Fonar as far as north of Kuchugury. Each plane flew twice on both sides of the line of buoys to a width of 800 meters. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled without incident.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 91 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges and put in to Kerch at 1845 on return passage.

Convoy No. 92 put out from Kerch at 1735 with 5 naval ferry barges.

c. Temriuk convoys:

Two naval ferry barges of Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 15 put in to Kerch with engine trouble. At 1120 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 16 put out from Genichesk for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges, 1 tug and 1 lighter.

d. Crimea convoys ran as scheduled.

e. Steamer convoys in the western Black Sea did not run because of the full moon.

Transportation figures for 11 - 20 May:

1. Anapa convoys (naval ferry barges only):

102 men  
61 guns  
41 tons mail  
3,662 tons service supplies.

2. Kerch-Temriuk convoys (naval ferry barges and lighters):

40 men  
265 horse-drawn vehicles  
11 guns  
19 tons mail  
2,499 tons service supplies

3. Genichesk-Temriuk convoys (naval ferry barges and a few lighters):

2,792 tons service supplies.

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4. Total in Kerch Strait (tonnage carried by Navy in brackets):

27,655 ( - ) men  
2,957 (508) animals  
975 ( - ) horse-drawn vehicles  
1,856 ( - ) motor vehicles  
210 ( 4 ) guns  
85 tons (10 tons) field mail  
24,112 tons (6,390 tons) service supplies.

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21 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Daylight air reconnaissance over the entire Caucasus coast could not be exhaustive owing to bad visibility. One towed convoy was detected in the Tuapse area, course northwest; otherwise only patrol boats were sighted between Ghelenjik and Gudauty. Coastal vessels were observed proceeding in both directions off the south Caucasus coast between Sukhum and Batum.

Reconnaissance of the ports was also incomplete owing to dense cloud cover. The presence of fighters made an oblique view of Ghelenjik necessary: 6 coastal vessels and 30 boats were identified there, while in Tuapse which was partially covered by clouds 7 coastal vessels were observed. No other ports were examined.

Night reconnaissance was not flown owing to the weather.

Reconnaissance in the Sea of Azov was also difficult because of the weather. No boat traffic was detected anywhere.

In the early morning on 21 May, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located the destroyer which had been shelled off Ivan Baba at midnight (see War Diary 20 May). This destroyer had first been located off the central east coast on the afternoon of 20 May. At 0115 she was detected in an unidentified position in the northeastern Black Sea and presumably, she put in to Tuapse between 1000 and 1100. Large destroyer "Charkov" was probably at sea at the same time. At 0900 a bearing of 125° was taken on her from Theodosia and, according to dead reckoning, she was approximately 60 miles west of Sochi on a southeasterly course. In unfavorable weather, neither destroyer was sighted by air reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station also located 1 submarine in the northeastern Black Sea. Presumably this was the submarine which was attacked at 0200 west of Cape Chauda by the convoy under the command of Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla.

Own Situation:

0345 One naval ferry barge and 4 coastal defense boats put in to Temriuk from patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary. They did not observe

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any air activity or incidents.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Odessa - Yalta: SW winds, force 3 - 4, veering to NW in the afternoon and increasing to force 5, cloudy, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

Yalta - Novorossisk: W - SW winds, force 3, veering to NW, force 4 - 5 in the evening, fair to cloudy, visibility above 10 miles, temperature at night 6° - 8° C.

After thorough investigation of the damage inflicted during the night of 19/20 May, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that S 52 and S 26 were ready for action, but that S 26 could only take 15 cbm. fuel because of hits in her fuel tanks. Her radius of action was therefore temporarily restricted. Both S 49 and S 72 were out of action and their repairs could only be carried out in Constantza. Both boats would be ready for passage to Constantza on the evening of 22 May at the earliest.

Today at 0000, S 28 and S 47 were ready for action in Constantza and they put out for Ivan Baba at 1700.

Today I ordered that the last 2 sections (K 5 and K 6) of the minefield in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait should be laid in about a week. The following preparations have still to be made:

1. The area must be swept for moored and non-contact mines.
2. The naval ferry barges to be employed must be fitted out and withdrawn from ferry traffic to the Gotenkopf bridgehead.
3. Mines and explosive floats have to be assembled.

The group of motor minesweepers (RA), motor minesweeper R 30, mine-exploding vessel No. 192, the FZ-group and minesweeping planes are to carry out the preliminary minesweeping tasks. Assembly of the naval ferry barges will be organized by Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus by a certain time to be arranged with Commander, Danube Flotilla.

Minelaying will be carried out by Commander, Danube Flotilla in accordance with his minelaying orders. The minelaying formation will be commanded by Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla, who will proceed to Kerch on 24 May to be at the disposal of Commander, Danube Flotilla.

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I ordered that the 2 minefield sections should be laid on 2 consecutive days so that the naval ferry barges employed would be free for convoy tasks as soon as possible. Commander, Danube Flotilla will submit his schedule for preparation and execution of the minelaying.

After completion of the repairs aboard naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1 and 3, I planned to transfer them to Temriuk as soon as the 8.8 cm. ammunition arrived. Naval gunnery lighter No. 2 would then be repaired in Kerch. Commander, 3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla was informed of this plan.

In view of the delays which have occurred during the last few days due to continuous bad weather and the stoppage of convoys during the full moon period, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea requested another postponement of R 35's and R 165's dockyard periods. As they were very necessary, I refused. Both boats have exceeded their prescribed number of operational hours by 2,000 hours. Without these boats and the Rumanian forces, Commander, Convoys and Escorts will still have 6 motor minesweepers at his disposal. With wise management in accordance with the rules I laid down (see War Diary 18 May), they should be adequate for escorting the steamer convoy traffic.

1930 Naval ferry barge F 401 and 4 coastal defense boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary.

Enemy Air Activity:

Enemy air activity was surprisingly slight throughout the day.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Naval Harbor Master, Genichesk reported that our own minefield between Ostrov Biriuchi and Genichesk had finally been cleared. No mines were swept. The wreck of the minelaying vessel with the mines was still in position.

Minesweeping in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait was carried out by 1 group with towed loop gear which swept the area eight times. A group with skid gear swept the area east of the line of buoys once. Owing to a breakdown of the motor generator, the group with skid gear had to break off operations. No mines were swept.

Minesweeping planes again swept for ground mines in the northern entrance to Kerch Strait as far

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as Cape Kasantip on both sides of the line of buoys, total width 800 meters. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 92 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges. On their return passage, the boats were unsuccessfully attacked by an enemy submarine 3.5 miles southeast of Zhelezni Rog at 1600. They continued passage and put in to Kerch at 1930.

Convoy No. 93 put out from Kerch at 1800 with 5 naval ferry barges.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 0520 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 21 put in to Temriuk with 8 naval ferry barges. At 1815 some of the barges commenced return passage to Kerch with freight towing vessel "Engerau" and lighter "Elenda Levendis".

The 2 naval ferry barges of Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 15 (F 382 and F 395) which put in to Kerch on 20 May with engine trouble put out today at 1815 to be repaired in Genichesk.

At 1300 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 16 put out for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges and tug "Baden 16".

d. The continuing bad weather impeded convoy traffic in the Black Sea and close to the Crimean coast. The convoys with large ships ("Charkov", "Prodromos" and "Celeno") did not run because of the full moon.

22 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In bad visibility, daylight air reconnaissance failed to detect any enemy forces in the south-eastern Black Sea. The Caucasus coast, on the other hand, was examined as far as Batum in visibility of between 10 and 15 km. Surprisingly heavy convoy traffic in both directions was observed between Ghelenjik and Tuapse. At least 4 convoys were at sea according to numerous independent observations and the results of photographic reconnaissance. They were mainly coastal vessels and towed convoys, but there were also a few large merchant ships of up to 1,000 tons. Apart from these convoys, single vessels and a surprisingly high number of single patrol vessels were sighted in this area.

Despite unfavorable weather, the convoys were attacked by dive-bombers which scored the following successes: 1 coastal vessel of 300 tons was sunk; 1 coastal vessel of 500 tons capsized after the ship's side was hit; 1 coastal vessel of 800 tons was set on fire; a patrol vessel was observed to be on fire after a direct hit and 1 lighter of 400 tons was damaged. During these attacks, our fighter escort shot down 3 enemy planes.

The present intensity of convoy traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse which, owing to bad visibility, has not always been detected at sea during the last few days, was further confirmed by frequent changes in the numbers of coastal vessels and small freighters in these ports. Today at 0855, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 8 coastal vessels, 1 torpedoboat and 1 minesweeper were detected in Tuapse. Ghelenjik was not examined.

Sukhum at 0935: 1 small armed vessel and 15 boats.  
Ochemchiri at 0945: both the submarine tenders,  
3 submarines and 1 coastal vessel of 600 tons.

No shipping traffic was detected in the Sea of Azov.

Night air reconnaissance examined the inshore waters off the Crimea and Taman Peninsula and the area from Novorossisk as far as Tuapse. They only detected 1 small vessel near Ghelenjik, thus confirming that, even when supply traffic was heavy, the enemy did not frequent this area which is endangered by our E-boats at night.

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From Mamaia, Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza intercepted the destroyer which put out from Tuapse on 21 May approximately 45 miles south of Ghelenjik. The same vessel was intercepted from Constantza at 1515 and, according to later observation, was 25 miles southwest of Novorossisk at 1845. At 1700 another destroyer was detected west of Dzhubg. Even in the late evening, both the destroyers were still detected at sea, so the enemy is obviously protecting the flanks of their convoy traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik.

Between 2000 and 2400, 2 submarines were located several times in the area southeast of the Crimea: at 2050 1 submarine was approximately 20 miles south of Kerch Strait and the other one approximately 45 miles south of Theodosia at 2155. Two more submarines were detected in the east coast area.

Own Situation:

- 0400 Naval ferry barge F 401 and 4 coastal defense boats put in to Temriuk from the patrol line on both sides of the Kuban estuary. The boats reported lively air activity from east to west, otherwise no incidents.
- 0500 E-boats S 28 and S 47 put in to Ivan Baba from Constantza. When the shell holes in S 26's fuel tanks are repaired at the base, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will have 4 boats ready for operations.

Simultaneously, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that the newly arrived boats S 42, S 45 and S 46 will be ready for operations on 27 May. They have first to undergo a short hauling up on the slips, trials, measured mile trials, compensation, D/F calibration and sea target practice with anti-aircraft guns, and the individual crews will have to be trained.

On the occasion of my visit to Ivan Baba yesterday, Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla requested that, after the E-boats' experience on their last operation, they should in future operate in groups of 3 boats so that, in the event of 1 boat breaking down, the 2 others could give adequate protection. Moreover, 3 boats would have a better chance of warding off air attacks. I shall comply with this request as far as possible. Furthermore, until further notice, I intend to employ the E-boats only northwest of Tuapse because the enemy is running most traffic here at present and the shorter passage to the operational area will enable the boats to remain there longer during these short nights.

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As the new boats (S 42, S 45, S 46) will also have new commanders and crews, I do not intend to deploy them south of Cape Idokopas. They will thus have an opportunity to become accustomed to the operational area in their first operations.

For the coming night, I have ordered no E-boat operation because, apart from the 2 boats which arrived at the base this morning, S 52 was the only fully operational boat available.

0650 Five naval ferry barges which were proceeding from Kerch to Theodosia were attacked by six 3-engined bombers off Cape Takil. Approximately 60 bombs were dropped from an altitude of 3,000 meters, but no damage was caused although the bombs landed accurately on the port side of the boats. Anti-aircraft guns were unable to fire because of the altitude of the planes.

At 1013 the same barges were attacked by a submarine with 2 torpedoes 2 miles southeast of Cape Chauda. Both torpedoes were surface-runners fired from a range of 2,000 - 2,500 meters. They exploded before reaching their target. No depth charges were dropped because the group commander considered it useless in view of the range of the submarine.

The low speed of the naval ferry barges and their lack of any radar equipment led me to approve the convoy commander's decision.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: W winds, force 3 - 4, squally, cloudy in patches, visibility above 15 miles, temperature at night 7° - 9° C.

The frequent appearance of enemy destroyers south of the eastern Crimea and Taman Peninsula during the last few days makes it necessary to ensure quick and reliable communication with Anapa convoys which put out in the early morning. Only when a signal recalling the ferry barges can be received immediately, will I consider it advisable for them to pass Cape Takil at 0400, while the enemy situation remains unchanged. The agreed short signal for recall to be transmitted by Naval Communications Officer in Kerch will not fulfill its purpose until air reconnaissance reports can be passed at top speed to Naval Communications Officer. I have ordered an investigation of this communication channel.

Today, Commander, 30th U-Boat Flotilla reported that U 18 would be ready for operations on 26 May and U 24 on 5 June. U 19 will be ready for her

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first operation on 10 June, U 20 on 14 June and U 23 about 20 June. If this schedule is maintained, it will be possible from approximately the middle of June to have 2 U-boats always in position in the operational area.

As a temporary measure, I agreed to the proposal of Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to run the naval ferry barge transports from Theodosia to Taman at night on the stretch from Cape Takil to Theodosia. Whether night passage can be constantly maintained will depend on the behavior of the enemy in this area. At any rate, in bright moonlit nights the transports will have to be stopped.

Today, I sent the following general operational orders to Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla so that, even in bright moonlit nights unsuitable for E-boat attacks, he could intercept any large enemy vessels which appeared again off the Crimean coast.

1. The operational boats in Ivan Baba should put out on receipt of the dated cover name "Ziethen". The cover name will be issued as soon as coastal authorities report enemy forces. The time will denote when the enemy should pass a line bearing 000° from Ivan Baba. Details of the enemy forces with course and speed will be transmitted simultaneously with the cover name.
2. If the wind blows from the shore or it is dead calm, the boats should put up an artificial smoke screen so that the sea is covered approximately 10 - 15 miles south of Ivan Baba when the enemy is about to pass. The boats should be lying in lurking positions to attack from behind this cover in an all-out operation and afterwards they should make off under the smoke screen.
3. Requests for the operating of shore batteries in case of emergency will be made by special star signals which will be arranged.

Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla was directed to make thorough preparations for this operation. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will inform the batteries of Naval Gunnery Detachments and Army Coastal Artillery in the Cape Meganom-Ivan Baba-Theodosia area, but will ensure that the intelligence is restricted as far as possible. Naval Shore Commander, Crimea will also arrange for the quickest and most accurate reports of all sightings to be sent to Admiral, Black Sea and 1st E-Boat Flotilla.

Enemy Air Activity:

No striking enemy air activity apart from the attack on the group of naval ferry barges off Cape Takil and another attack on Novorossisk, when about 16 high explosive bombs were dropped.

Novorossisk also reported the usual artillery and anti-tank bombardment of the site at the east harbor and the southern sector.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Minesweeping in Kerch Strait was continued as scheduled.

Supply Traffic:

a. Despite unfavorable weather, ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Anapa convoy No. 93 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges. At 1730 convoy No. 94 put out from Kerch and anchored off Janysh Takil in the evening.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1700 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 22 commenced return passage from Temriuk to Kerch with 4 naval ferry barges, 1 tug, 2 lighters and naval gunnery lighter No. 2.

Four naval ferry barges of Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 16 and the last 2 naval ferry barges of Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 15 put in to Genichesk on return passage. The convoys ran as scheduled without incident.

d. Crimea convoys ran as scheduled.

The "Charkov" and "Celeno" convoys which were ready to sail in the western Black Sea did not run because of the full moon.



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23 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In good visibility, daylight air reconnaissance examined the ports and the Caucasus coast area as far as Batum. Unlike yesterday, traffic was relatively slight: at 1613 1 coastal vessel, course southeast, was sighted 5 miles south of Ghelenjik; at the same time 2 coastal vessels, course southwest, putting out from Tuapse; at 1640 off Adler, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, course southeast, escorted by 1 minesweeper and 1 motor minesweeper. No traffic in the rest of the area.

Reconnaissance of the ports detected the following vessels:

Ghelenjik at 0554: 4 coastal vessels, 3 motor minesweepers and 3 M.T.B.s.

Tuapse at 0612: 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 12 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 tons, 2 torpedoboats, 4 motor minesweepers, 2 minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s, 3 small armed vessels and 20 boats. Since 22 May, enemy ships in the port of Tuapse have increased by 4 coastal vessels and 3 freighters totaling 3,300 tons. This again confirms the heavy traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse.

Sochi at 0625: 4 motor minesweepers and 25 small boats.

Sukhum at 0713: 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 2 minesweepers, 2 motor minesweepers and 20 small boats.

Ochemchiri at 0704: 2 submarine tenders, 7 submarines, 6 motor minesweepers, 2 M.T.B.s, 2 coastal vessels totaling 800 tons, and 12 boats.

Naval Liaison Officer to 1st Air Corps reported that, despite an intensive search, the destroyers which were located on 22 May in the northeastern Black Sea were not sighted by air reconnaissance. The bearings obtained on 22 May must therefore either have referred to the torpedoboats detected in Tuapse or on the other hand, the enemy may now be approaching the northeastern Black Sea via areas which our air reconnaissance does not cover. Today, despite visibility of about 50 km., the sea reconnaissance plane detected no shipping traffic off the south Crimean coast as far as the Turkish coast.

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No enemy shipping traffic in the Sea of Azov. Enemy boats in ports and fisheries were unchanged. At 0020 night reconnaissance detected 1 coastal vessel 15 miles southeast of Ghelenjik and 1 guardboat 22 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, while at 0125 2 small vessels totaling about 500 tons were sighted off Ghelenjik. It is therefore possible that, in bad weather when our E-boats cannot operate, the enemy is also seizing the chance to run convoy traffic at night.

No large surface vessels were detected at sea by Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza. The destroyer which was located on 22 May was presumed to be lying in Tuapse (see above). At 2138 1 submarine was located 25 miles southeast of Yalta and 2 more submarines were detected off the east Crimean coast and in the east coast area.

Own Situation:

0710

At 0710 south of Sudak, an enemy submarine attacked naval ferry barges F 307 and F 329 which had put out from Yalta to the east at 0330. This was the first time that a surfaced submarine had attacked with guns off the Crimean coast. According to the commander of the group of naval ferry barges, it was a large submarine of at least 750 tons. She surfaced on the starboard quarter at a range of some 3,000 meters and turned to starboard to attack. F 307 also turned to starboard and opened fire with her 7.5 cm. gun; F 329 turned to port and fired first her 2 cm. guns and then her 7.5 cm. gun. The enemy replied with fire from a larger caliber gun. The naval ferry barges scored 3 certain hits on the submarine's conning tower and, after the third hit, she listed to port and submerged or sank slowly. The Customs Frontier Guard, Uskut observed thick smoke aboard the submarine and when the smoke disappeared the submarine could no longer be seen. She may therefore have been destroyed.

F 329 was hit on the port side level with the steering position. All 3 engines and the rudder broke down and men of the 7.5 cm. gun crew were wounded. Casualties: 4 men dead and 2 men seriously wounded. Immediately after the engagement, F 307 came alongside F 329 to give assistance. She was therefore unable to attack the submarine with depth charges.

Depth charges dropped at once at the place of submerging might have been successful under the particularly favorable conditions, as there were

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oil traces from the damaged submarine. The decision of F 307's commander to assist the badly damaged F 329 instead of attacking the limping submarine can be attributed to his lack of experience. Most boats have only a leading seaman in charge.

I cite this incident to direct all naval forces once more that their main task is to destroy the enemy regardless of their own situation.

0750 At 0750 off Sudak, 6 bombers attacked a convoy which was proceeding from Theodosia to Yalta. It comprised motor minesweeper R 35, tanker "Swoyswome", naval ferry barges F 170, F 314, F 316 and F 386. The planes attacked from the port side in 2 groups from an altitude of about 800 - 1,000 meters, dropping 50 - 60 bombs which landed between R 35 and "Swoyswome" without causing any damage. Anti-aircraft fire from 2 cm. and 7.5 cm. guns had no perceptible success.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Odessa - Yalta: S winds, force 5 - 6, increasing and veering W to NW in the afternoon, cloudy to overcast, showers, visibility 2 - 5 miles, later 10 miles.

Yalta - Novorossisk: S - SW winds, force 5 - 6, cloudy, showers, visibility decreasing from 10 to 3 - 5 miles, temperature at night 8° - 10° C.

After completion of the preparatory work in Kamish Burun for the net barrage off Anapa, work was started in Anapa today.

As the heavy enemy convoy traffic between Ghelenjik and Tuapse was running mainly by day and our E-boats could therefore not operate against it by night, I altered U 9's operational order. While operating between Sukhum and Gagri, she was ordered to proceed at once to the area between Tuapse and Ghelenjik and take up position as near the coast as possible. She was to attack with torpedoes even small targets e.g. coastal vessels and lighters.

Today, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported S 26's fuel tanks again in order and her full radius of action restored. As the weather is at present unsuitable for operations, I have not ordered the E-boats to put out or to remain at immediate notice.

1420 Naval ferry barge F 470 ran aground in 45° 6' N, 36° 55' E while on return passage with Anapa

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convoy No. 94. Her engines broke down and, in wind SW, force 5 - 6, sea 5, she drifted ashore. Naval ferry barge F 302 was left behind to attempt to tow her off, but she was unsuccessful. By evening F 470 reported her engines in order again and an attempt was to be made to salvage her on 24 May by employing 2 tugs from Kerch.

2000

Naval gunnery lighter No. 3, naval ferry barge F 401 and 4 boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary,

Enemy Air Activity:

Apart from the above-mentioned attack on the Crimea convoy, Theodosia was twice raided today between 1000 and 1100. Four bombers took part in each attack, dropping a total of 35 bombs from an altitude of 3,500 - 4,000 meters. Slight damage to buildings in the harbor and vicinity. Casualties: 2 Air Force personnel wounded.

Novorossisk reported slight artillery and mortar fire and 4 high-explosive bombs which landed on the southern sector and on the sites at the harbor.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Continuation of minesweeping activity was badly impeded by unfavorable weather. In the southern entrance to Kerch Strait, a group with towed loop gear swept the area east of the line of buoys twice between Eltigen and Cape Takil. They then had to break off because of the weather. No mines swept.

The group of motor minesweepers (RA) carried out exploratory sweeps in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait where minefield sections K 5 and K 6 were to be laid.

Minesweeping by the FZ-group off Genichesk was also handicapped by the weather. No mines were swept, although the area on both sides of the line of buoys was covered twice with one width of gear.

Minesweeping planes, which did not operate because of the weather, were repaired and overhauled.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled without incident.

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b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 94 (5 naval ferry barges) was unloaded in Anapa as scheduled. As already mentioned, naval ferry barge F 170 ran aground on return passage owing to engine trouble and a strong sea wind blew her ashore. The other 4 boats continued passage to Kerch.

At 1800 convoy No. 95 put out from Kerch with 5 naval ferry barges and anchored off Kamish Burun.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1815 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 23 put out from Kerch for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges, freight towing vessel "Engerau" and lighter No. 1353. Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 17 arrived at Temriuk as scheduled with 4 naval ferry barges and, after unloading, commenced return passage to Genichesk at 1600.

d. Crimea convoys and the convoys in the western Black Sea which could brave the weather ran as scheduled. The proposal of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea to postpone the "Charkov" convoy (Constantza - Sevastopol) until 25 May was rejected when 1st Air Corps protested that they had already sent a fighter Staffel to Sevastopol which they must recall on 25 May as planned. The convoy will put out on 24 May as scheduled.

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24 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Owing to bad weather, air reconnaissance was not exhaustive. Visibility was only good over the central and southern parts of the Caucasus coast. In the northern coastal area between Ghelenjik and Tuapse only isolated observations were possible in visibility of 10 km. The following ships were detected: at 0635 1 coastal vessel, course northwest, off Tuapse and 2 coastal vessels totaling 500 tons, course southeast, 5 miles southeast of Tuapse; 1 M.T.B., course northwest, 25 miles northwest of Sukhum; 1 coastal vessel of 600 tons, course northwest, west of Sukhum; 3 motor minesweepers, course north, 12 miles south of Sukhum; at 0555 1 freighter of 1,500 tons and 4 escort vessels, course southeast, 23 miles northwest of Poti.

At 1900 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted approximately 20 small vessels off Ghelenjik heading for the landing area; no further details were observed.

The number of coastal vessels in Ghelenjik had increased. Here, at 0655 7 coastal vessels and lighters totaling 2,000 tons, 65 small boats, 4 motor minesweepers and 25 M.T.B.s were detected.

Tuapse at 0637 (only partially examined owing to cloud cover): 1 minesweeper, 1 freighter of 800 tons and some 15 boats.

Sukhum at 0608 (oblique view): 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 coastal vessel of 500 tons, 2 minesweepers and 15 small boats.

Ochemchiri at 0553: 5 submarines, 2 submarine tenders and 2 coastal vessels totaling 800 tons.

No shipping was detected in the Sea of Azov and the number of ships in the ports and fisheries was unchanged.

Night reconnaissance detected 1 coastal vessel off the Caucasus coast between Novorossisk and Tuapse. At 0245 1 motor minesweeper was observed 5 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, course southeast, while at 0105 2 ships of 600 tons were sighted 12 miles northwest of Tuapse. At 0250 2 M.T.B.s were detected southeast of Anapa, course southeast.

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Own Situation:

0300 Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla with "Grafenau" and tug "Braunkohle" put out from Kerch to tow off naval ferry barge F 470 which ran aground between Zhelezni Rog and Maria Magdalena Bank on 23 May. Their attempts were not successful as the sea wind had blown F 470 high on the beach. 150 Russian refugees who were on board were transferred by land to Taman. The crew is still aboard.

At 0930 naval ferry barge F 470, "Gravenau" and "Braunkohle" were machine-gunned by enemy fighters. Only "Gravenau" was slightly damaged; no planes shot down.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus brought up a quadruple anti-aircraft gun platoon to the place of the accident to protect the naval ferry barge until she could be salvaged. "Gravenau" and "Braunkohle" returned to Kerch at 1410.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Odessa - Yalta: SW winds, force 5 - 7, later veering to WNW, squally, cloudy to overcast, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

Yalta - Novorossisk: wind mainly S, force 5 - 6, fair to cloudy, overcast with isolated showers in the afternoon, visibility 10 miles, temperature at night around 10° C.

Shortly before entering Sevastopol 3 miles north of the approach buoy, the tanker "Celeno", which had proceeded from Constantza escorted by 2 Rumanian destroyers and motor minesweepers R 164 and R 197, was attacked by a submarine. Three torpedoes were fired at long range, all missed the target. One torpedo exploded just ahead of R 164, but it was a surface-runner and caused no major damage. During the attack, the submarine was presumably within the Russian declared area. In tying up in Sevastopol, "Celeno"'s hull was badly damaged. Six plates and 7 ribs were bent. The cargo was not damaged and, after emergency caulking, "Celeno" would be able to return to Constantza if the weather was good.

Today in Constantza S 40 was commissioned to 1st E-Boat Flotilla and colors were hoisted.

In a discussion with a representative of Home Staff (Overseas Branch) and the plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping on the transfer of further ships for supply traffic in Kerch Strait, the representative of

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Home Staff (Overseas Branch) confirmed that all ships placed at the disposal of Admiral, Black Sea could be used. He also acknowledged the need for the transfer of more tugs and lighters.

Enemy Air Activity:

1717

Five enemy planes attacked the 5 naval ferry barges of the return Anapa convoy No. 95 in 2 waves in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. Altitude of attack 1,400 meters. 20 bombs were dropped inflicting no damage. The anti-aircraft guns were not successful. Apart from this raid there was no important air activity. At 1023 Theodosia had an air raid alarm, but no bombs were dropped. Early in the morning some bombs were dropped on open fields south of Taman.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight artillery fire on the site at the east harbor and on the town area.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Today, 4 motor minesweepers (RA) started sweeping preparatory to minelaying in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait (minefield sections K 5 and K 6). Work was temporarily suspended owing to the weather. The group with skid gear swept the coastal route in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait four times with single width of gear. No mines swept.

No minesweeping planes operated today.

Supply Traffic:

a. Despite unfavorable weather, ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled without incident.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 95 ran as scheduled. (For air raid on this convoy, see above).

At 1930 convoy No. 96 put out from Kerch with 5 naval ferry barges.

c. Temriuk convoys:

The 4 naval ferry barges of Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 23 which put out on 23 May with tug "Engerau" and lighter No. 1353 put in to Temriuk at 0400 as scheduled. At 1350, after unloading, all the vessels commenced return passage to Kerch.



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No traffic ran from Genichesk to Temriuk owing to the weather.

- d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea were also held up by the weather. The towed convoy from Odessa to Sevastopol, which comprised "Ship 19" and the 2 naval ferry barges F 492 and F 493 with their cargo of 8.8 cm. ammunition for naval gunnery lighters, had to anchor behind Tendra because of the gale.

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25 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Bad visibility impeded daylight air reconnaissance. Planes flew along the Caucasus coast as far as Batum, but only the ports as far as Sukhum could be examined. No enemy traffic was detected in varying visibility in the south-eastern Black Sea. One towed convoy with 2 escort vessels was sighted south of Ghelenjik making for Ghelenjik. One M.T.B., course southeast, was sighted in the Tuapse area and there was 1 coastal vessel, course northwest, off Sochi.

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik at 0805 (partially covered by clouds):  
5 coastal vessels and 30 boats.

Tuapse at 0748: 2 freighters of 1,500 tons and 800 tons respectively, 10 coastal vessels and lighters totaling 3,000 tons, 20 boats, 3 minesweepers, 4 motor minesweepers, 2 M.T.B.s and 1 small armed vessel.

Sochi at 0723: 1 coastal vessel of 300 tons, 5 motor minesweepers, 1 small armed vessel and 10 boats.

Sukhum at 0705: 1 freighter of 800 tons, 2 coastal vessels, 1 gunboat and 25 boats.

No shipping traffic was detected in the Sea of Azov. In Yeisk 1 motor raft was sighted which had not been observed before. Enemy shipping in ports on the Sea of Azov showed no important changes.

No night reconnaissance was flown because of the weather. At 0330 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk observed 9 vessels making off from the landing area towards Cape Doob.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected no large surface vessels. Radio monitoring of the activity of enemy naval forces was impossible because they had changed their radio procedure.

Submarines detected: 2 off the south coast of the Crimea and 1 in the central Black Sea.

At 2300 Anapa airfield radar station located 5 - 6 vessels south of Cape Utrich.

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Army guns scored a direct hit on an enemy supply vessel which sank off the beachhead (type not identified).

No important engagements took place anywhere on the Army front. The imminent enemy large-scale attack is expected to begin very soon.

Own Situation:

- 0035 Anapa reported that shortly after midnight 2 enemy M.T.B.s were sighted approximately 3,000 meters from the coast off Anapa. When shelled by shore batteries, they turned away immediately. Naval Port Commander observed hits on both boats.
- 0330 Naval gunnery lighter No. 3, naval ferry barge F 401 and 4 boats put in to Temriuk from the patrol line on both sides of the Kuban estuary. No enemy air activity was observed. Nothing to report.
- 0355 Naval gunnery lighter No. 4 of 3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla was sent out from Constantza to the east today with a towed convoy which was proceeding to Sulina.

I reported to Group South today on the subject of naval gunnery lighters that, after the arrival of new 8.8 cm. ammunition and completion of caulking in naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1 and 2, offensive operations were planned against concentrations of enemy boats northeast of the Kuban estuary. Naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1, 2 and 3 (the latter is now in Temriuk) will be available, but naval gunnery lighter No. 4 will probably not arrive in the Sea of Azov until 8 - 10 days from now at the earliest.

- 0700 S 72 and S 49 put out from Ivan Baba to Constantza for repairs today.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: SW - W winds, force 2 - 4, fair, visibility above 10 miles, temperature at night 9° - 11° C.

- 1100 Steamer "Charkov" which was escorted by the Rumanian destroyer "Marasesti" and 4 motor minesweepers ran aground off the entrance to Sevastopol. Immediate attempts to tow her off were unsuccessful. The ship's tonnage was then reduced to a minimum by all available forces in Sevastopol and Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was directed to put out with the 4 motor minesweepers lying in Sevastopol and "Ship 19"

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for anti-submarine patrol in the vicinity of the stranded vessel.

The question of blame has not yet been settled. The preliminary investigations which I ordered in Sevastopol revealed that the commander of "Charkov" had been following in the wake of the escort vessels which were sailing ahead with connected gear. One can assume that, as the ship ran aground in water 8 meters deep, the commander of the escort forgot to consider "Charkov"'s deep draught and therefore passed too near the shoals.

1150 Approximately 6 miles south of Kük Atlama, an enemy submarine attacked the tanker convoy ("Dresden", "Prinzipessa Maria" and "Rheinkontor") which was proceeding from Yalta to Theodosia escorted by 5 naval ferry barges. Barge F 170 sighted the submarine's periscope and the rim of her conning tower and immediately attacked with depth charges. The submarine was forced to submerge before she fired any torpedoes. The naval ferry barges then put up an artificial smoke screen round the convoy, while barges F 170 and F 121 remained for about 1 hour at the place of submerging but observed no results. At 1240 4 enemy bombers attacked the same convoy, dropping some 30 bombs from an altitude of 1,400 meters. The bombs landed accurately, some of them only 10 meters from the vessels. However, apart from slight damage to "Dresden", there were no casualties or damage. Anti-aircraft fire from all guns had no success.

Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to operate against enemy supply traffic between Tuapse and Ghelenjik during the night of 25/26 May. Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla was informed of the very heavy convoy traffic of coastal vessels and towed convoys during the last few days and was directed to launch torpedoes against all valuable targets including lighters. Since, in view of the situation on the Army front, heavy fighter escort for return passage could not be allocated by the Air Force, the boats were ordered to leave the operational area at 0130.

U 9 which was in the same operational area was ordered to proceed 20 miles further out to sea from 2100 to 0300. 1st E-Boat Flotilla was informed of U 9's position and anti-submarine operations were forbidden in the area east of 37° 30' E.

1500 E-boats S 47, S 52, S 28 and S 26 put out from Ivan Baba for operations as ordered.

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According to a report from 30th U-Boat Flotilla, U 18 is ready for operations today. In view of the sea reconnaissance reports during the last few days, I wondered whether to send U 18 also into the operational area between Novorossisk and Tuapse where there was at present most enemy supply traffic. U 9 had already been transferred to this area for that reason. The comparatively small area would then have to be divided into 2 separate sectors for U 9 and U 18 and at night our E-boats were also operating there regularly. Since each boat would have inadequate space to operate, particularly against fast convoys, in her small sector, I decided that it would be more advisable to send U 18 into the area between Sukhum and Gagri and to transfer the boat to the north only when U 9 commenced return passage. 30th U-Boat Flotilla will receive the necessary orders.

Group Command asked me for my opinion on the tactical employment of Q-ships and their camouflage. I reported that "Ship 19" was the only Q-ship in the Black Sea and also at present the only vessel equipped with radar. She was therefore more advantageously employed as anti-submarine escort for valuable convoys. Her additional operations as a Q-ship were too short to have any success. As soon as the new armed fishing vessels are available as submarine chasers, I plan to employ "Ship 19" as a Q-ship close to the Crimean coast between Eupatoria and Cape Takil where enemy submarines are now detected almost every day. She will proceed alone on route Brown and will be escorted by 2 naval ferry barges only in the event of serious danger from planes. I do not consider it necessary to re-camouflage "Ship 19" as she has not yet appeared as a Q-ship and the enemy will not recognize her as such.

I ordered that the former Russian submarine chasers which were brought from Theodosia to Sevastopol should be transferred to Constantza with the next towed convoy to have radar installed.

On the subject of the naval gunnery lighters, I reported to Group South today that, after the arrival of new 8.8 cm. ammunition and after completion of caulking in naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1 and 2, offensive operations were planned against concentrations of enemy boats northeast of the Kuban estuary. Naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1, 2 and 3 (the latter is now in Temriuk) will be available, but naval gunnery lighter No. 4 will probably not arrive in the Sea of Azov until 8 - 10 days from now at the earliest.

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During the next new moon period, I intend to have a minefield laid between Ghelenjik and the Myshako beachhead. The best time will be from 29 May to 5 June. I have decided to reinforce the E-boats which will lay the minefield by bringing up the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was therefore ordered to send the Crimea group from Sevastopol to Kerch as quickly as possible. On passage they should sweep route Brown again with oropesa gear, 15-meter pendant, putting in to Kerch on the morning of 28 May at the latest.

2130 Naval gunnery lighter No. 3, naval ferry barge F 401 and 3 boats which put out from Temriuk for patrol duties at 1930 put in again at 2130 because of rough seas.

Enemy Air Activity:

In addition to the raid on the tanker convoy south of Kük Atlama, 4 planes attacked Theodosia at 1635. 16 bombs were dropped from a very high altitude, slightly damaging buildings in the harbor area. In the evening another raid was directed against Temriuk harbor area; 15 bombs landed close to the harbor, no damage.

During the night of 24/25 May, 69 bombs were dropped on Anapa (town and airfield). No damage was reported.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported bombing of the southern sector and the center of the town and artillery and mortar bombardment of the southern sector and the center of the town.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

The group of motor minesweepers (RA) continued to prepare for the laying of minefield sections K 5 and K 6. They swept an area 800 meters wide and marked the boundaries of the closed area with buoys. No mines swept.

The FZ-group widened the coastal route between Pavlovski harbor and Eltigen with 2 sets of towed loop gear (K) and a noise box (turbines) to a width of 220 meters. They swept the area 12 times. No mines swept. The group with skid gear swept the same route four times. No mines swept.

Minesweeping planes searched for ground mines on the coastal route in the southern entrance to

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Kerch Strait and in the area where minefield sections K 5 and K 6 were to be laid. No mines swept.

FZ-Group, Genichesk swept the approach route on both sides of the line of buoys to a width of 100 meters. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 96 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges. At 1810 convoy No. 97 put out from Kerch with 6 naval ferry barges. F 137 had to put in again owing to engine trouble.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1840 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 24 put out from Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges, tug "Braunkohle" and lighter No. 1292.

At 1020 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 18 put out from Genichesk for Temriuk with 3 naval ferry barges, tug "Baden 16" and lighter No. 1583.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled. (For stranding of steamer "Charkov", see above.)

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26 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In good visibility, daylight air reconnaissance sighted the following ships in the area off the Caucasus coast: at 0500 2 coastal vessels and 1 patrol vessel, course northwest, 25 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 0506 5 small armed vessels, course southeast, 15 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 0611 1 coastal vessel of 800 - 1,000 tons, course southeast, 12 miles northwest of Sochi; 3 small armed vessels, lying stopped, off Ochamchiri.

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik at 0658: 4 coastal vessels totaling 1,200 tons, 40 boats, 4 motor minesweepers and 18 M.T.B.s.

Tuapse: 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 10 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 tons, 20 boats, 2 minesweepers, 2 motor minesweepers and 2 M.T.B.s.

Sochi at 0551: 5 motor minesweepers, 15 small boats.

Adler and Gudauty: No vessels.

Sukhum: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons and 20 boats.

Ports and fisheries on the Sea of Azov were not reconnoitered because of the weather. At 2400 night reconnaissance detected 1 tug, 2 barges totaling 1,200 tons and 2 patrol vessels 27 miles northwest of Tuapse and at 0015 1 small ship, stopped, 20 miles west of Tuapse.

Between 0300 and 0400 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 4 vessels making off from the beachhead to Ghelenjik.

Army front: After an initial assault by artillery and planes in the Kuban bridgehead, the enemy began the attack which we have been expecting for days. They attacked the 9th Infantry Division sector and 44th Army Corps on the eastern front.

Only northwest of Krimskaya near Gorichni did they succeed in penetrating our main line of defense with some 90 tanks. The area of penetration was later cleared with the assistance of strong forces of planes.

Reports from Army Group A on the morning of 25 May to the effect that Anapa had been bombarded during the night by 3 enemy ships turned out to be invalid. Presumably, the Army had seen bombs and

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our return anti-aircraft fire, as Anapa was raided heavily during the night of 24/25 May. These errors and the false reports which are repeatedly made owing to Army observers' ignorance of procedure at sea (size and type of the reported ships) lead to false assessment of the situation at sea and hence to undesirable alarm among higher authorities. I therefore again requested Army Group A to check any results of observation affecting the sea situation with me before sending them out.

Own Situation:

0645

1st E-Boat Flotilla put in to Ivan Baba from operations in the area northwest of Tuapse. At 1610 on 25 May, 5 bombers had attacked the boats on passage to the operational area with 30 bombs and machine-guns. S 52 was slightly damaged by splinters, otherwise no damage. From 2200 to 0030 the boats were in lurking positions close to the coast. They had several engagements with gunboats and patrol vessels, no damage. At 0100 return passage was commenced because of the weather.

The enemy may attempt to support the attack on the Army front, which began today, by operations on the south coast of the Kuban bridgehead. Reconnaissance results, prisoners' statements and agents' reports revealed that the main aim of the enemy attack was to cut off Novorossisk. A landing in the Anapa area would further this aim and at the same time would restrict our forces. The increasing appearance of light enemy naval forces in the northeastern Black Sea recently, the great rise in supply traffic to the Myshako landing place and the high number of coastal vessels and boats in Ghelenjik and Tuapse may be proof of those enemy plans.

I therefore consider it necessary as long as enemy attacks continue against the Gotenkopf beachhead to employ our forces so that enemy supply traffic south of Novorossisk can be attacked and efficient patrols maintained in the coastal area on both sides of Anapa. Thus, the boats could change to offensive operations at any time according to the situation. With this aim, I shall have the E-boats proceed via route Brown and then close to the coast via Anapa to the operational area. This measure is also advantageous in that, on return passage close to the coast, the boats will be within range of the fighters which fly from the operational airfields on Kerch Peninsula to the Kuban front. In the event of enemy success in today's battles on the Army front, landing operations may be expected

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especially in the coming night if the weather is suitable. 1st E-Boat Flotilla is therefore to occupy the patrol line between Anapa and Novorossisk during the night of 26/27 May. Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were accordingly ordered to stand on and off in the patrol line between Cape Utrich and Oseraika valley parallel to the coast. Outward and return passage via route Brown and close to the coast as far as Anapa. The boats' task will be to prevent enemy landing operations in an all-out effort and to attack enemy naval forces.

I reserve the privilege of amplifying this order for direct offensive operations as soon as any clues or reports on preparations for enemy landing operations or sailing of formations are available. At present no such reports have been submitted.

Owing to unfavorable weather conditions which also prevented enemy landing attempts, 1st E-Boat Flotilla was unable to put out in the afternoon.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: Wind mainly S, force 4 - 6, veering via SW to W in the afternoon and increasing to force 5 - 7, cloudy to overcast, local showers, visibility 8 - 10 miles, temperature at night 13° - 15° C.

The situation regarding steamer "Charkov" (see War Diary 25 May) is unchanged. Up to now, only 500 tons have been taken off as the rough seas allowed work on the port side only. The ship is aground amidships and moves slightly. At 1800 another unsuccessful attempt was made to tow the ship off. During the night, unloading of the cargo in the bow will be continued. Two more anchors were put out. Anti-submarine protection is being provided by day by "Ship 19" and 4 naval ferry barges and at night by 4 motor minesweepers.

I have entrusted Naval Port Commander, Sevastopol with all the salvage work. He will be assisted by Commander, Sea Transportation, while Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla is in command of the anti-submarine defenses. Naval Port Commander was ordered to proceed with the work employing all available vessels and sparing neither material nor personnel.

I have ordered court-martial proceedings against the commander of "Charkov" and have instructed the Command of the Rumanian Naval Forces to take

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similar measures against the Rumanian commander of the escort. Commander, Sea Transportation was directed to examine the navigational equipment of all merchant ships used in convoy traffic.

Salvage of naval ferry barge F 470 which was stranded near Zhelezni Rog has so far been impossible. The boat is firmly embedded in the beach and is already in sand 1 meter deep. Salvage of ammunition and equipment has been arranged and removal of engines and guns planned.

1400 U 18 put out from Constantza for operations in the area between Sukhum and Gagri.

The increasing number of air and submarine attacks on our convoys induced me to direct all flotillas in my command to attack all enemy forces energetically. (See Appendix.)

1930 Temriuk reported that patrol activity on both sides of the Kuban estuary was restricted because of the weather. When the winds abated at 2245, operations were again as scheduled.

Enemy Air Activity:

At 0655 northeast of Cape Meganom and at 1020 southwest of Sudak, bombers attacked the "Dresden", "Netty" and "Elbe 5" convoy which was proceeding from Theodosia to Yalta escorted by 3 naval ferry barges. Bombs were dropped from an altitude of 1,500 meters, causing no damage. No planes were shot down.

Throughout the day, several air raids were carried out on ports in the Crimea. In 2 raids at 1045 and 1800, a total of 8 planes dropped 12 bombs on Yalta. No damage to naval property, no casualties. Some Air Force buildings and other buildings in the town were damaged.

At 1125 5 planes dropped 20 bombs on Theodosia from an altitude of 3,000 - 4,000 meters, no casualties, no damage.

Kerch was raided from 2025 to 2040. Bombs landed on Pavlovski, the southern part of the town and Kolonka. No damage was reported.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported that flares and high-explosive bombs were dropped on the southern sector and the southern part of the town. Artillery and mortar bombardment of the site at the east harbor and the southern sector.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and  
the Sea of Azov:

Four motor minesweepers (RA), which put out to check the closed area (K 5 and K 6) in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait, had to abandon operations because of the weather. Minesweeping planes and groups with towed loop gear and skid gear had to break off operations because of the weather.

The FZ-group twice searched for mines on both sides of the line of buoys in the harbor entrance. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait was considerably impeded and reduced by the weather.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 97 put in to Kerch again because of the weather.

c. Temriuk convoys:

Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 24 ran as scheduled with 1 tug, 1 lighter and 4 naval ferry barges.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 18 is on return passage to Genichesk.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled.

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27 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

In good visibility, daylight air reconnaissance detected the following vessels in the area off the Caucasus coast: at 0622 1 towed convoy totaling 500 tons, course southeast, 15 miles northwest of Tuapse; at 0600 1 submarine 30 miles southeast of Ghelenjik; at 0808 1 M.T.B., course southeast, off Sochi; 1 M.T.B., course southeast, off Adler; 1 motor minesweeper, course southeast, 5 miles south of Adler; at 0725 1 freighter of 2,000 tons and 2 guardboats, course south, 5 miles northwest of Poti.

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik: 7 motor minesweepers, 14 M.T.B.s and 50 small boats.

Tuapse: 1 minesweeper, 3 M.T.B.s, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 10 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 tons, and 20 boats.

Sochi at 0808: 3 minesweepers, 30 boats, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 freighter of 800 tons, 1 coastal vessel of 300 tons.

Gudauty at 0751: 4 boats.

Sukhum at 0740: 1 torpedoboat, 1 minesweeper, 1 motor minesweeper, 1 probable gunboat, 2 freighters of 1,500 and 1,000 tons respectively, and 20 boats.

Ochemchiri at 0735: 6 submarines, 2 submarine tenders, 4 motor minesweepers, 2 coastal vessels totaling 600 tons, and 10 boats.

The Sea of Azov and its ports were not reconnoitered because of the weather.

No night reconnaissance was flown owing to the weather.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located no large surface vessels. On the Army front, after initial successes, our counter-attack at the place of penetration northwest of Krimskaya (see War Diary 26 May) was halted by an enemy counter-attack with strong tank support. The enemy has not yet started the expected large-scale attack southwest of Krimskaya.

Own Situation:

0320 Tanker lighter "Elbe 5" which put out with tug "Netty" ran aground off Yalta harbor entrance when the towing hawser broke. In the heavy

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swell she sprang a leak. Salvage has been arranged.

- 0400 Temriuk reported patrol duties carried out off the Kuban estuary as scheduled without incident.
- 0740 E-boat S 507 (MAS 575) struck a wreck in Theodosia harbor and was badly damaged below the waterline. She had to be beached.
- 0900 U 20 was commissioned at Galatz for 30th U-Boat Flotilla. Her commander is Lieutenant Schöler.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Odessa - Yalta: SW - W winds, force 4, squally, mostly overcast, showers, visibility varying from 3 to 10 miles.

Yalta - Novorossisk: SE winds, force 3, later veering to SSW, force 4, cloudy and overcast, local showers, visibility decreasing from 12 to 5 miles, temperature at night 12° - 14° C.

Since, despite initial successes, the enemy did not advance further on the eastern Army front, no landings seemed likely to exploit their success. For that reason, it was not necessary for 1st E-Boat Flotilla to be disposed as I had intended on 26 May.

1st E-Boat Flotilla received the following orders for the night of 27/28 May:

During the night of 27/28 May, 4 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla are to operate against enemy supply traffic close to the coast between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse. Gunboats and patrol forces are also to be attacked if the enemy detects our operations. If possible, torpedoes should be used for the attacks. Outward and return passage via route Brown close to the Taman coast as far as off Anapa, then at a certain distance from the coast. The flotilla should be off Anapa at 2000, reaching the operational area at about 2230. Boats should commence return passage to pass Anapa at approximately 0330.

- 1500 When the unfavorable weather continued, the operational order for 1st E-Boat Flotilla was canceled at 1500. 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that S 49 would be out of action until 9 June and S 72 until 5 June. (They had been damaged by planes on 20 May.)

Throughout the day in somewhat more favorable weather, steamer "Charkov"'s tonnage was further

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reduced by employing all available lighters. At times, unloading from both sides was facilitated by using oil against the swell. 1,500 tons were unloaded up to 2000 and the ship is still watertight. Another attempt to tow her off is to be made on 28 May after further unloading during the night. For this purpose, tug "Engerau" has been sent out to Sevastopol. Anti-submarine escort was provided as scheduled, by 4 naval ferry barges and "Ship 19" by day and by motor minesweepers at night.

Today, I requested fighter escort from 1st Air Corps to protect the minelaying formation in the operation planned for 30 and 31 May in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait.

1930 Patrol forces put out from Temriuk as scheduled for duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary. At 2130 the boats put in again because the sea was too rough and the wind was force 5 - 6.

Enemy Air Activity:

At 1150 3 miles east of Zhelezni Rog, 9 planes made a low-level attack on Anapa convoy No. 97. 20 - 30 bombs were dropped and the vessels were also machine-gunned. A bomb landed on naval ferry barge F 328 and, after her cargo of ammunition exploded, she sank. The crew was rescued; 4 men were seriously wounded and others slightly wounded. One plane was probably shot down by our anti-aircraft guns.

At 1152 off Cape Chauda, 3 bombers attacked the convoy consisting of "Engerau" and 3 naval ferry barges. Bombs were dropped from an altitude of 2,000 meters, no hits. Our anti-aircraft guns were not successful.

A third attack was made on S 501 (MAS 566) which had put out from Theodosia for individual training. A total of 8 planes attacked at 1550 and 1605, dropping some 26 bombs of medium caliber. No damage. Anti-aircraft guns could not operate because the attacks were made from an altitude of 3,000 - 4,000 meters.

Anapa was continuously attacked during the night when there were 18 raids. 130 high-explosive bombs and many incendiary bombs were dropped, causing slight damage to buildings.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported the usual artillery fire on the harbor site and the southern sector, otherwise no incidents.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and  
the Sea of Azov:

Motor minesweepers (RA) continued to sweep the southern entrance to Kerch Strait in preparation for minefield sections K 5 and K 6. To widen the coastal route, the FZ-group and the group with skid gear searched from Pavlovski to Eltigen 12 times. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Owing to the weather, convoy No. 97 had to turn about east of Zhelezni Rog and put in to Kerch again. Naval ferry barge F 328 was sunk in an air raid (see above).

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1800 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 25 put out from Kerch for Temriuk with 5 naval ferry barges.

At 1010 Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 18 put in to Genichesk on return passage with 3 naval ferry barges.

At 1200 convoy No. 19 put out for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled.



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28 May, 1945

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

At 0330 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 9 vessels (1 gunboat, 6 tugs and barges and 2 M.T.B.s) near the landing place.

At 0635 daylight air reconnaissance detected an enemy submarine, course north, 12 miles south of Alupka; at 0738 1 coastal vessel of 300 tons, course southeast, 5 miles southeast of Ghelenjik; at 0751 1 patrol vessel, stopped, off Tuapse; at 0751 1 patrol vessel 15 miles southwest of Poti; at 1745 1 freighter of approximately 1,000 tons and 2 small armed vessels, course 240°, 5 miles southeast of Tuapse.

Enemy shipping in port:

Tuapse at 0742: 1 freighter of approximately 1,000 tons, 1 freighter of approximately 800 tons, 6 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons, and several boats.

Sochi at 0700: 1 torpedoboat, 1 minesweeper, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, and some boats. The other ports were not reconnoitered because of the weather.

No enemy ships or boats were detected in the Sea of Azov.

At 0215 night reconnaissance over the Crimean and Caucasus coasts detected a small vessel 8 miles south of Cape Chauda; at 0007 2 small vessels 18 miles north of Tuapse; at 0012 1 patrol vessel off Tuapse; at 0100 2 coastal vessels totaling 700 tons and 1 patrol vessel, course northeast, 18 miles north of Tuapse; at 0115 2 small vessels 8 miles south of Ghelenjik.

Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza detected no large surface vessels from radio traffic. Submarines detected: 4 in the Crimean area and 1 in the western Black Sea. Small vessels were active off the east coast.

On the Army front, strong enemy attacks at the place of penetration northwest of Krimskaya gained them no ground, otherwise nothing to report.

Own Situation:

0100 Steamer "Charkov" was refloated after further unloading. She will be towed in to Sevastopol

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at daybreak. The escort vessels (4 motor minesweepers, 4 naval ferry barges and "Ship 19") put in at 0700. Towing vessel "Engerau" which was on passage from Kerch to Sevastopol to give assistance in towing was ordered back to Kerch.

The vigorous and methodical execution of this important salvage task by Naval Port Commander and Commander, Sea Transportation deserves full acknowledgment.

0600 Tanker lighter "Elbe 5" which ran aground off Yalta harbor entrance was also towed off by tug "Netty" and 2 naval ferry barges. The heavy swell caused more leaks and she had to be beached in the harbor.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: SW - W winds, force 5 - 6, squally, mainly overcast, isolated showers, visibility 6 - 8 miles, temperature at night 13° - 14° C.

Owing to the weather, execution of 1st E-Boat Flotilla's operation ordered for 27 May and postponed owing to unfavorable weather again became doubtful. 1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to put out on receipt of codeword "Seydlitz". As the wind did not substantially abate until evening, the sailing order was not issued.

1400 "Ship 19" reported that she had located a submarine 7 miles north of the approach buoy at Sevastopol. Three depth charge attacks brought no visible success.

The 1,000-ton lighter "Kriti" sank in the Dnieper off Stanislav after an explosion: cause not yet known.

In answer to my request, 1st Air Corps transferred 2 minesweeping planes to Constantza today for employment on the Danube between Galatz and Sulina. German Naval Command, Constantza was ordered to arrange the operations of these planes directly and ensure that an officer with local knowledge was aboard.

The heavy enemy supply traffic between Ghelenjik and the beachhead south of Novorossisk is still running almost entirely by day and during twilight to avoid attack by our E-boats. Since at present there are no planes available to attack these ships, I can only disrupt the traffic with the means at my disposal, i.e. mines. I therefore issued the appended order to 1st E-Boat

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Flotilla and the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla for a joint minelaying operation between Ghelenjik and the beachhead.

The Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla had been temporarily employed in Sevastopol on anti-submarine operations during the salvaging of steamer "Charkov". The boats were now ordered to sweep route Brown with dropesa gear and 15-meter pendant from Sevastopol to Theodosia. A check of the route was necessary, since minelaying seemed fairly certain as submarines had frequently been detected off the Crimean coast during the last few days. At 2000 motor minesweepers R 163 and R 166 put out from Sevastopol to carry out the task as ordered.

1950. Naval gunnery lighter No. 3, naval ferry barge F 401, 4 harbor defense boats and 4 combined operations boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties on both sides of the Kuban estuary.

Enemy Air Activity:

Today there were no air raids on convoys or naval forces.

At 1605 7 planes attacked Theodosia, dropping 8 bombs. No damage, no casualties.

Novorossisk reported the usual mortar fire on the site at the east harbor. One man was wounded in Naval Port Command 16.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Two motor minesweepers (RA) and mine-exploding vessel No. 192 today again operated in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait to prepare for minelaying (sections K 5 and K 6).

The group with skid gear and the FZ-group searched for ground mines east of the line of buoys in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait. They swept the area six to eight times without result.

Minesweeping planes searched for ground mines in preparation for minefield sections K 5 and K 6. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

a. Despite unfavorable weather, ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Convoy No. 98, which put out from Kamish Burun

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for Anapa at 0530 with 6 naval ferry barges, put in again at 0930 owing to the weather.

c. Temriuk convoys:

Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 25 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges, 2 tugs and 1 lighter and put in to Kerch at 2035 on return passage.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 19 is on return passage from Temriuk to Genichesk with 4 naval ferry barges. Convoy No. 20 put out from Genichesk for Temriuk at 1420 with 4 naval ferry barges.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled.

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29 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

During the night and by day Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted heavy enemy traffic proceeding to the beachhead. From 0310 to 0430 he observed 34 vessels including tugs and lighters. In the forenoon, 5 coastal vessels proceeded from Ghelenjik to the southeast, while 5 tugs, 14 lighters and 5 coastal vessels proceeded from the southeast to Ghelenjik. At 1847 2 minesweepers, 1 motor minesweeper, 1 sea-going tug, several small tugs, 10 lighters, 2 coastal vessels and 2 patrol vessels were off Ghelenjik.

In moderate visibility, daylight air reconnaissance detected the following traffic off the Caucasus coast: at 0650 several boats off Ghelenjik; at 0947 several motor minesweepers on alternating courses, 1 towed convoy and 3 coastal vessels totaling 500 tons, course southeast; at 0710 1 patrol boat, course north, off Tuapse; at 0747 1 coastal vessel, course west, 22 miles south of Sukhum; 1 freighter of 800 tons 28 miles south of Sukhum; at 0803 1 coastal vessel of 600 tons and 2 M.T.B.s, course north, 15 miles north of Batum; 2 M.T.B.s and 1 patrol boat off Poti.

The following ships were observed in Caucasus ports:

Ghelenjik at 0947: 6 coastal vessels totaling 1,500 tons, and several boats.

Tuapse at 0925: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 7 coastal vessels totaling 1,800 tons, and several boats.

Sochi at 0905: 1 motor minesweeper and 2 coastal vessels totaling approximately 1,000 tons.

Sukhum at 1847: 1 freighter, 5 coastal vessels totaling 1,000 tons, and several boats.

Ochemchiri at 0835: 2 submarine tenders and 1 coastal vessel of approximately 700 tons.

At 0125 night reconnaissance detected 1 probable large vessel 13 miles south of Ghelenjik and at 0228 1 minesweeper, course south, 10 miles west of Novorossisk.

Reconnaissance over the Sea of Azov revealed nothing of importance. No shipping traffic, usual enemy shipping in ports and fisheries.

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At 1252 Main Naval D/F Station, Constantza located 1 destroyer bearing 114° from Theodosia, probably in Tuapse.

Air reconnaissance detected no naval forces as far as 80 km. west of Tuapse. In all, 6 submarines were located at sea.

Own Situation:

0430 The coastal defense vessels put in to Temriuk. No incidents on either side of the Kuban estuary, no air activity observed at sea.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: N - NW winds, force 2 - 3, overcast, later fair to cloudy, visibility approximately 10 miles, temperature at night 10° - 12° C.

Since 27 May, the E-boats had been prevented by the weather from putting out for their intended operation ("Seydlitz", see War Diary 27 May and 28 May). When the weather improved, they were ordered to carry out this operation during the night of 29/30 May. As U 9 was still in the operational area, anti-submarine operations by the E-boats were not permitted. U 9 was informed of the E-boat operation and ordered to withdraw from the coast during the night.

The 2,000-ton steamer "Birgit" which had been transferred from the Aegean Sea has arrived in Constantza and is now available for supply traffic in the western Black Sea. First voyage to Sevastopol intended on 2 June.

On 29 May from Mariupol, Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reported bombardment of Taganrog harbor by enemy shore batteries from the south shore of Taganrog Bay. Range approximately 12 km. As soon as the position of the enemy batteries is accurately located, the Air Force will be requested to attack. Possibilities for bombardment by Army batteries are being investigated.

30th U-Boat Flotilla, Constantza reported that U 19 would probably be ready for operations from 10 June.

At 1410 4 miles south of Cape Sarich, an enemy submarine unsuccessfully attacked tug "Netty" and 2 naval ferry barges which were proceeding in convoy from Sevastopol to Yalta. The ship's guns also had no visible success. On further passage, 2 naval ferry barges acted as flanking escorts.

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At 1635 another attack was made 6 miles west of Alupka, presumably by the same submarine which had hauled ahead of the convoy. One torpedo track was sighted, but the torpedo exploded on the shore. No visible success scored by ship's guns.

1600 Motor minesweepers R 163 and R 166 put in to Kerch from Sevastopol. As ordered, the boats searched route Brown with oropesa gear, 15-meter pendant from Sevastopol to Point 16. No mines swept. At 1308 6 miles southwest of Cape Opuk, 3 bombers dropped 10 bombs on the motor minesweepers from an altitude of 2,500 meters. No damage, no casualties. The ship's guns could only fire 40 rounds of 3.7 cm. ammunition as the planes were only visible below the clouds for a short time. No results observed.

1640 At 1640, as ordered, 10 naval ferry barges put out from Kerch for minelaying in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait (K 5).

Laying of the last part of the minefield in Kerch Strait necessitated an extension of the declared area to the south. As the gap between our own minefield and the Russian declared area used by Anapa convoys would become comparatively narrow and require most accurate navigation, the boundary of the declared area was laid down to conform to the line connecting Kys Aul light-house and the eastern point of Cape Zhelezni Rog. By use of these excellent landmarks, the declared area could be avoided without difficulty in normal weather. Simultaneously, the boundaries of the declared area were extended further west after lighter No. 1582 had sunk east of Cape Takil.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to inform all officers commanding formations and Anapa convoys of the limits of the declared area and the new routes.

1930 Naval gunnery lighter No. 3, naval ferry barge F 401 and 8 boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties northeast of the Kuban estuary.

Enemy Air Activity:

With the exception of the above-mentioned raid on the motor minesweepers, no air attacks were made today. No ports or loading places were attacked.

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk also reported no air activity, but the usual artillery fire on the site at the east harbor, the southern part of the town and the site at the south harbor.

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Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and  
the Sea of Azov:

Preparations for laying minefield sections K 5 and K 6 were continued by mine-exploding vessel No. 192 which swept for ground mines. No mines swept. The group of motor minesweepers (RA) carried out an exploratory sweep on the new route between Cape Takil and Zhelezni Rog. No mines swept. At 1730 motor minesweeper R 30 and the group of motor minesweepers (RA) put out on minelaying operations.

Supply Traffic:

a. In favorable weather, ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled without incident.

b. Anapa convoys:

At 0300 Anapa convoy No. 98 put out from Kerch as scheduled with 6 naval ferry barges. The vessels put in to Kerch on return passage at 1925.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1910 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 26 put out from Kerch for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges, 2 tugs and 2 lighters.

No Genichesk-Temriuk convoys were sent out today.

d. Crimea convoys ran as scheduled without incident.



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30 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk reported slight traffic from Cape Doob to the beachhead (2 M.T.B.s and 3 small vessels).

In bad visibility, daylight air reconnaissance examined the Caucasus coast as far as Batum, detecting the following shipping: at 0607 1 motor minesweeper 16 miles west of Tuapse; at 0700 off Ochenchiri 1 motor minesweeper and 1 freighter of 1,500 tons with 3 escort vessels 10 miles from the coast, course south; at 0644 1 guardboat northwest of Poti and 1 motor minesweeper west of Poti; at 0710 1 small vessel, course northwest, 7 miles south of Sochi; at 0730 1 motor minesweeper 10 miles southeast of Tuapse; at 0808 2 guardboats off Ghelenjik.

Of the ports, only Ghelenjik was examined: 6 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons, and some 50 boats. The other ports could not be reconnoitered because of the weather.

No enemy traffic was sighted in the Sea of Azov. The Air Force reported that from 10 to 30 May 126 boats, 6 rafts and 4 barges loaded with ammunition and guns had been sunk or destroyed in the lagoon area northeast of Temriuk.

Night air reconnaissance detected the following vessels: at 0002 3 boats 20 miles southwest of Novorossisk, at 0030 1 towed convoy of 300 tons with 3 escort vessels 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik and at 0050 1 coastal vessel 10 miles northwest of Tuapse. Main Naval D/F Station, Mamaia detected no heavy surface forces at sea.

Submarines located: 4 in the western Black Sea and the Crimean area, 5 in unidentified positions and the area off the Caucasus coast.

Own Situation:

- 0400 The vessels put in to Temriuk from patrol duties. Lively air activity was observed over the coast and at sea, otherwise nothing to report.
- 0650 Commander, Danube Flotilla reported minefield section K 5 laid in Kerch Strait as scheduled. Laying of K 6 was planned for 31 May.
- 0730 - E-boats S 47, S 28 and S 26 put in to Ivan Baba from operations. From 2300 to 0100 the boats

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were in lurking positions close to the coast southeast of Idokopas. No traffic was observed. Observations were impeded by bad visibility and a high swell from south. On passage to Cape Chauda, 2 bombs were dropped but the planes were not sighted owing to clouds. No damage. At 1845, when her starboard engine broke down, S 52 had to be released to proceed to Ivan Baba.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Crimean and Caucasus coasts: W - NW winds, force 2 - 3, later veering to W and increasing to force 4 - 5, fair to cloudless, visibility above 10 miles, temperature at night 12° - 14° C.

At 0850 16 bombers attacked the 3 naval ferry barges of Anapa convoy No. 99 east of Zhelezni Rog. F 332 was set on fire when a direct hit was scored on her gasoline cargo and is probably a total loss. Two men were wounded. The barges shot down 2 planes, one of them by a direct hit from the 7.5 cm. guns. A third plane was hit several times. This plane was not seen to crash because the crews were busy warding off further planes. While flying off, 9 more planes were shot down by our fighters.

Our routine sailing times give the enemy valuable help for these regular raids on Anapa convoys. I therefore ordered that Anapa convoys should in future run at irregular and varying hours. Prompt information to 1st Air Corps on the sailing hours should be ensured by Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus. I have decided to run the convoys at night only. Loss of time and poor exploitation of shipping (see War Diary 19 May) must be accepted to avoid the ever-increasing losses by day.

If we do not then succeed in reducing our losses in naval ferry barges (4 total losses on the Kerch-Anapa route since 19 May), it is doubtful whether the new vessels in the Black Sea area will balance the losses and provide the necessary tonnage. Because of the priority of this supply route, Anapa traffic cannot yet be suspended, but the question may later have to be considered. In an emergency, transfer of further naval ferry barges will have to be promptly arranged via the Elbe and the Danube.

Investigation of the explosion of lighter "Kriti" (see War Diary 28 May) revealed that the ship sank from an internal explosion. At the place of the explosion, the ship's side was bent outwards. Most likely sabotage. Investigations are going on.

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Today, I informed Naval Liaison Officer to 17th Army H.Q. that naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1, 2 and 3 and 3 motor minesweepers would be ready to operate against the enemy coast in the Sea of Azov on about 2 June. I also reported that I intended to bombard Primorsko Akhtari first of all. Naval Liaison Officer will find out if the Army considers that there are any other important targets which could be attacked. I pointed out that execution will depend on the weather and the enemy situation and I have already requested 1st Air Corps to fly photographic reconnaissance one day in advance of the operation.

1st E-Boat Flotilla will not operate during the night of 30/31 May, as the boats are to be ready for the imminent "Nautilus" operation.

U 9 reported that, in accordance with safety regulations, the magnetic firing on torpedo No. 3 was switched off after the long depth charge pursuit to avoid premature detonation. No further torpedo operations against shallow-draught vessels were therefore possible. Since no large enemy vessels were expected in the operational area north of Tuapse, U 9 was ordered to transfer immediately to the area between Tuapse and Uchdere where larger supply vessels also operate.

1310 Naval ferry barges F 301 and F 304 were attacked by a submarine 5 miles southwest of Alupka. The torpedo was out-manuevered and the 7 depth charges dropped had no visible result.

I rejected the proposal of 23rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla to extend the training period of the first 4 armed fishing vessels by a further 14 days, because our present lack of submarine chasers makes it imperative to employ them operationally at once.

1st E-Boat Flotilla, Constantza reported the sailing of the 4 new boats (S 40, S 42, S 45 and S 46) to Ivan Baba. On 31 May, they will carry out measured mile trials in Sevastopol and will then proceed to Ivan Baba.

Today, R 206 was commissioned in Linz for 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and colors were hoisted. Her commander is Lieutenant Grooth.

1930 Naval ferry barge F 401, 4 harbor defense boats and 4 combined operations boats put out from Temriuk for patrol duties.

2005 Four boats of 11th E-Boat Flotilla carried out the first night exercises between Theodosia and Cape Meganom.

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Enemy Air Activity:

After detection by a reconnaissance plane at 1030, the convoy comprising "Netty", lighter No. 1139 and 2 naval ferry barges which was proceeding from Yalta to Theodosia was twice attacked by 6 bombers. The first attack was made at 1210 when 30 accurate bombs were dropped from 1,600 meters. No damage, ship's guns apparently unsuccessful. The second attack was at 1615 off Kdk Atlama. A near miss resulted in a large leak in tug "Netty". The ship sank in 30 seconds. The crew was rescued by a naval ferry barge. Barge F 217 towed lighter No. 1139 to Theodosia.

No damage to lighter No. 1139 or the naval ferry barges. All our anti-aircraft guns were in operation, but no hits were observed.

Anapa was bombed repeatedly between 2000 and 0230. 36 high explosive bombs were dropped, damaging buildings and material. Taman Peninsula was frequently penetrated and numerous bombs were dropped. No damage to Navy property reported.

Novorossisk reported the usual artillery and mortar bombardment of the east harbor and the southern sector, also 16 high-explosive bombs.

Between 0130 and 0200 Anapa was shelled by enemy boats with 3.7 cm. guns. The boats made off when our shore batteries opened up.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 192 continued to sweep for ground mines in preparation for minfield section K 6. No mines swept.

Motor minesweepers (RA) protected the flanks during the minelaying operation and then checked the new Cape Takil-Zhelezni Rog route again with oropesa gear. No mines swept. Commander, Danube Flotilla reported that the new route from Brown 17 to Brown 18 could be opened to traffic. Minesweeping planes and the group with skid gear did not operate.

Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

At 0310 convoy No. 99 put out with 2 naval ferry barges. Barge F 332 was set on fire.

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in an air raid. At 1930 barges F 539 and F 305 put in to Kerch on return passage.

At 1830 Anapa convoy No. 100 put out from Kerch for Anapa with 5 naval ferry barges (F 139, 314, 340, 372, 471).

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1855 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 26 put in to Kerch on return passage with 1 tug, 1 lighter and 4 naval ferry barges.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 20 is on return passage to Genichesk with tug "Amsel", 1 lighter and 4 naval ferry barges.

At 1400 convoy No. 21 put out for Temriuk with 4 naval ferry barges.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled without incident.

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31 May, 1943

Simferopol

Enemy Situation:

At 0310 Naval Port Commander, Novorossisk sighted 5 small vessels and at 0400 1 further vessel heading for Ghelenjik from the beachhead. One patrol vessel was off Cape Doob at 1845.

At 0740 daylight air reconnaissance detected 1 patrol boat 25 miles northwest of Poti and at 0835 1 motor minesweeper putting out from Tuapse. Reconnaissance was badly impeded by the weather.

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik at 0845: 7 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 tons, and some 40 boats.

Tuapse at 0835: 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 8 coastal vessels totaling 3,000 tons, and 20 boats. Owing to the weather, the other ports were not reconnoitered.

Unfavorable weather did not permit night reconnaissance.

Main Naval D/F Station, Mamaia located 1 destroyer and lively activity of enemy ships off the southern part of the east coast. Ten submarines were also detected at sea, 4 of them in the Crimean coast area and the western Black Sea.

In face of superior enemy resistance, our attack on the Army front to mop up the place of penetration northwest of Krimskaya did not achieve its aim, but despite continued enemy attacks, our main line of defense stood firm. No landings seem imminent for a large-scale pincer attack.

Own Situation:

During the night, an enemy M.T.B. fired a torpedo at the wreck of naval ferry barge F 332 which had run aground northwest of Anapa and burned out on 30 May. The torpedo missed the target.

0400 The boats which put in from the patrol line reported lively air activity at sea, otherwise no incidents.

An Army observation post on the north coast of Kerch Peninsula reported minelaying by 10 planes between Cape Sjuk and Cape Tarkhan. Route Red was closed from the northern entrance to Kerch Strait as far as Genichesk and traffic from

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Genichesk to Temriuk was diverted further north.

0630 Commander, Danube Flotilla reported minelaying in the southern entrance to Kerch Strait (K 6) carried out as scheduled. The enemy did not observe the operation.

Weather forecast  
(Simferopol 0930):

Odessa - Yalta: NW winds, force 3, later increasing to force 4 - 5, cloudy to overcast, showers, visibility up to 10 miles.

Yalta - Novorossisk: S - SW winds, force 4 - 5, later veering to WNW, cloudy, showers, visibility up to 10 miles, temperature at night 10° - 13° C.

At 1200 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported from Ivan Baba that S 40, S 42, S 46 and S 45 were ready for action. At 1910 the boats put in to their base from Sevastopol.

This means that we have 8 E-boats at readiness in the area. However, as 4 of the commanders are new, the boats will at first take part in short, simple operations only.

On 28 May, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported motor minesweeper R 197 ready for action.

The attack on the wreck of naval ferry barge F 332 in the early morning again proved that the advantage of running Anapa convoys at night to avoid air raids is doubtful. Just as the first Anapa convoys were repeatedly shadowed by enemy M.T.B.s in their anchorage off Zhelezni Rog, so the coastal area between Kerch Strait and Anapa is now being regularly patrolled. As soon as the enemy becomes aware that our convoys are running at night, enemy M.T.B.s will surely be detailed to attack them.

For that reason, I do not consider it right to run Anapa convoys regularly at night. On the other hand, night convoy operations close to the Crimean coast seem at present the only means of protecting the vessels from attack. Daylight traffic which runs with almost clockwork regularity offers favorable opportunities for air raids and the enemy has recently exploited such chances systematically. Since the Air Force cannot at present allocate fighter protection owing to lack of forces and the anti-aircraft guns aboard our transports and escorts are inadequate for successful defense, night traffic involves less risk than traffic by day. Close to the Crimean coast, M.T.B. attacks are not

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likely to be so frequent as east of Kerch Strait.

I therefore ordered that convoys and supply transports between Sevastopol and Kerch should in future be organized so that the route is covered in 3 stages (Sevastopol - Yalta, Yalta - Theodosia, Theodosia - Kerch), if possible during the hours of darkness and twilight. The only exception is that from 3 days before until 3 days after full moon convoys are not to be sent out at night because of the increased submarine danger.

1800

Commander, 3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla, Kerch reported that naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1 and 2 had put out for Temriuk. Naval gunnery lighter No. 3 is undergoing final repairs (setting of 8.8 cm. guns) in Kerch. She too will put out for Temriuk after completion of the repairs.

At 2000 patrol boats put out from Temriuk for the patrol line on both sides of the Kuban estuary.

Enemy Air Activity:

Throughout the day, there were no attacks on convoys or naval forces.

During the night, Mariupol and Taganrog had short raids. In each case 2 bombs were dropped on the harbor areas, no damage.

Novorossisk reported slight artillery and mortar bombardment of the harbor sites, otherwise nothing to report.

Minesweeping Activity in Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov:

Mine-exploding vessel No. 192 swept the coastal route four times in the southern part of Kerch Strait. No mines swept.

Motor minesweepers (RA) provided anti-aircraft protection while K 6 was being laid. The group of motor minesweepers (FR) shot up the explosive floats and watching buoys in minefield section K 5.

Minesweeping planes and the groups with skid gear and towed loop gear did not operate.

Naval Liaison Officer, Galatz reported that the Danube estuary had been swept for ground mines by a minesweeping plane as scheduled. After engine trouble is eliminated in the second plane which was transferred to Mamaia, minesweeping will be continued on 1 June.

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Supply Traffic:

a. Ferry traffic in Kerch Strait ran as scheduled.

b. Anapa convoys:

Today, Anapa convoy No. 100 ran as scheduled with 5 naval ferry barges (F 139, 314, 340, 372, and 471).

Anapa convoy No. 101 is planned for 1 June.

c. Temriuk convoys:

At 1855 Kerch-Temriuk convoy No. 27 put out from Kerch for Temriuk with 1 tug, 1 lighter and 4 naval ferry barges. Naval gunnery lighters Nos. 1 and 2 were transferred with this convoy.

Genichesk-Temriuk convoy No. 21 is on return passage to Genichesk with 4 naval ferry barges.

d. Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled without incident.

(Signed) Kieseritzky.

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Survey for May 1943

A. Enemy merchant ships sunk:

6 coastal vessels totaling 3,100 tons  
(by E-boats).

B. Enemy naval forces sunk:

1 Russian M.T.B. (by motor minesweepers)  
1 Russian submarine damaged (3 hits on  
the conning tower, 7.5 cm. guns of naval  
ferry barges).

C. Enemy planes shot down:

8 planes for certain and probably 13 more.

D. Enemy air raids:

1. On naval vessels and convoys	49
2. On Crimean ports	19
3. On ports and loading places at the Kuban bridgehead	40 - 50.

E. Enemy submarine attacks: 13.

F. Convoys escorted:

In the month of May, naval forces escorted  
284 ships totaling 119,918 G.R.T.

G. Supplies to the front at the Kuban bridgehead:

1. Anapa convoys (naval ferry barges only):

287 men  
157 vehicles  
102 guns  
101,147 tons of supplies and field mail.

2. Kerch-Temriuk convoys (naval ferry barges and  
lighters only):

178 men  
902 vehicles  
37 guns  
14,098 tons of supplies and field mail.

3. Genichesk-Temriuk convoys (by the Navy only,  
mostly naval ferry barges):

16 men  
7,498 tons of supplies and field mail.

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4. Yalta-Kerch-Taman timber transports (naval ferry barges only):

2,288 tons.

5. Kerch Strait:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>By the Navy</u>
Men	85,134	186
Vehicles	8,630	-
Guns	508	44
Animals	10,142	1,446
Supplies and field mail	63,521 tons	20,486 tons

6. Summary of 1. to 5. gives the following total:

<u>Transportation, Navy:</u>		<u>Transportation, Army and Air Force:</u>	
Men	667		84,948
Vehicles	1,059		8,630.
Guns	183		462
Animals	1,446		8,696
Field mail	284 tons		257 tons
Supplies	54,233 tons		42,778 tons.

As the Navy transported most supplies on the long sea routes (see above), the respective performances of the Navy and the Air Force/Army can only be judged from that angle. During the month of May, the following amount was transported, expressed in "miles x tons":

Navy	approximately 2,850,000 miles x tons
Army/Air Force	578,000 " " "

Therefore the ratio was 5 : 1.

If the considerable troop transports of the Army and Air Force ferries amounting to approximately 8,500 tons are included, the Army/Air Force performance would be about 691,000 miles x tons and the ratio of the Navy's performance to that of the Army/Air Force 4 : 1.

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APPENDIX I

Admiral, Black Sea.

26 May, 1943

Serial No. Gkdos.3123 A I.

To:

3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla  
1st E-Boat Flotilla  
11th E-Boat Flotilla  
Danube Flotilla  
3rd Gun Carrier Flotilla  
5th Landing Craft Flotilla  
30th U-Boat Flotilla  
Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea.

Copy to:

Naval Group South  
Naval Shore Commander, Crimea  
Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus  
Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine  
Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast.

Postagram

Since submarines and planes have recently been attacking convoys and supplies every day, we are forced to increase our defenses.

We must strive for immediate and energetic use of weapons, most careful look-outs, quickest possible transmission of orders and complete readiness for action.

Even in driving off enemy attacks, the primary aim must always be the destruction of the enemy. Defense measures alone lead to no positive success.

In air raids, the enemy should be attacked by barrage fire of 7.5 and 8.8 cm. guns and effective fire from light anti-aircraft guns. Recent successes have repeatedly confirmed that planes can be shot down by light naval forces and naval ferry barges if their fire is accurate and if they are energetically commanded.

Enemy submarines must be destroyed at all costs. It is not enough to repulse them or shake them off and then to continue passage. To attack a submarine is more important than to escort a convoy or even to assist damaged vessels. An assignment is not over until the destruction of the submarine has been established beyond doubt. In steamer convoys, the convoy commander must decide in each case whether there are enough escort vessels to allow boats to be detailed for long anti-submarine operations. Defense of such convoys takes precedence over anti-submarine operations.

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Capable officers or, if necessary, petty officers who understand the meaning of "successful attacks on enemy planes and submarines" should be employed as senior officers of convoys and group commanders of supply convoys etc. All commands involved should bear this particularly in mind.

After putting in to port, any engagement or action should at once be reported by teletype to Admiral, Black Sea.

Senior officers of convoys and all commanders should be informed.

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APPENDIX II

Admiral, Black Sea.

28 May, 1943

Gkdos. Chefs. 143 A I.

To:

Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla, Ivan Baba  
Group Commander, Crimea Group of 3rd Motor  
Minesweeper Flotilla.

Copy to:

Naval Group Command, South, Ops.

1. Situation:

The enemy is constantly bringing up supplies from Ghelenjik to the beachhead south of Novorossisk. To avoid E-boat attacks during the night, the traffic runs mainly at twilight and during the day. With the naval forces at our disposal, these convoys can only be disrupted and damaged by minelaying. (We are disregarding air raids.)

2. Order:

- a. Mines are to be laid at irregular intervals in the area between the lines connecting the following points:

From  $44^{\circ} 35.7' N, 37^{\circ} 53.6' E$   
to  $44^{\circ} 36.1' N, 37^{\circ} 55.0' E$   
to  $44^{\circ} 34.7' N, 37^{\circ} 56.6' E$   
to  $44^{\circ} 34.3' N, 37^{\circ} 55.2' E$ .

- b. Mines required: 48 FMC mines. On 30 May, there will be 24 FMC mines available in Ivan Baba and 24 in Kerch.
- c. Mine-carrying vessels: S 26, S 28, S 47, S 52 and motor minesweepers R 163 and R 166.
- The number of mine-carrying vessels will, if possible, be increased by 2 E-boats.
- d. Depth setting: minus 1 meter.
- e. Mines are to be laid unobserved by the enemy. If the minefield is laid in an area other than that prescribed in para.2.a., the navigational position should be defined and reported.
- f. Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be in command.

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3. Execution:

- a. On receipt of codeword "Nautilus", mines are to be taken aboard the E-boats in Ivan Baba and the motor minesweepers in Kerch on X-day.
  - b. On X-day the boats should put out from Ivan Baba and Kerch to reach Brown 18 at 1800. Further passage via the mine-free route close to the Taman coast as far as off Anapa, thereafter at a certain distance from the coast so that at 2400 the formation is ready for minelaying in line abreast on the line connecting the points 44° 34.7' N, 37° 56.6' E and 44° 34.3' N, 37° 55.2' E.
  - c. After carrying out the minelaying task, the motor minesweepers should be dismissed. They should proceed to Anapa at maximum cruising speed at a certain distance from the coast; there, at approximately 1200, they should join the naval ferry barges of the Anapa convoy on return passage to Kerch.
  - d. After completion of the minelaying task, E-boats should proceed at high speed past the landing places at Myshako north of the Russian declared areas. If possible they should make a surprise attack on the landing places with torpedoes and guns and then immediately withdraw from the coast to continue return passage to Ivan Baba.
  - e. Enemy naval forces should be avoided until after the execution of the minelaying task.
  - f. On return passage, the motor minesweepers should pass through the southern part of the Russian declared area off Novorossisk Bay, while the minelaying formation should pass through it on outward passage. According to previous experience, any mines in this area have a greater depth setting than 2 meters.
4. After entering port, execution of the minelaying task should be reported by teletype and the barrage report should be submitted in triplicate to Admiral, Black Sea.

14 July, 1943

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

1. Reference:

"Own Situation", para 6, 18 May:

Directions from Group were that the E-boats would be more successfully employed against Russian forces attacking our own coast, if they used Anapa as their jumping-off base rather than Ivan Baba. This would avoid the long approach. Group emphasized that our offensive forces should not take up defensive patrol line positions off our coast, unless enemy plans for landing had been discovered.

Reference:

"Own Situation" at 2240 on 20 May:

Even on bright nights, 2 E-boats should be certain of success against a single destroyer. At least the Russians should perceive that any operations on our convoy routes or against our coast will be met by counter-attacks by our offensive forces. The enemy must be forced to employ more forces and thus wear out their vessels.

Reference:

"Enemy Situation", 22 May:

It is extremely important to find out which convoy routes the Russians use and to determine their exact navigational position by means of reconnaissance so that our own naval forces can operate there or mines can be laid.

Reference:

Operational orders for E-boats, 22 May:

Since Admiral, Black Sea has still not achieved any successes by sending E-boats from Ivan Baba to operate against Russian naval forces reported to be operating close to the Crimean coast, execution of these operational plans is based largely on theoretical assumptions. However, every opportunity must be used to assemble experience for such operations.

Reference:

"Own Situation", 25 May - operational orders:

E-boats and U-boats were deliberately disposed in the same operational area for complementary operations (day and night). We must investigate thoroughly whether this procedure is advisable by assessing their



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joint experiences. Occasionally the ban on anti-submarine operations for E-boats leaves them with no prospect of success, as Russian submarines have also been detected in the operational areas of our offensive forces. Our offensive forces have already met several times by chance in the operational area, thus creating confusion. Our U-boats and E-boats must have a clear field.

A joint operation by 2 U-boats seems possible if they are in tactical cooperation. Joint operations should be tried on the lines of the pack tactics in other theaters, making allowances for the conditions peculiar to the Black Sea.

Reference:

"Own Situation", 25 May - "Ship 19":

The general attitude of Group was that it was better to change camouflage too early than once too late, as this might eliminate any prospects of success.

2. It is strange that Group's directives concerning basic principles of warfare in the Black Sea are not mentioned in the War Diary. For instance, on 26 May Group issued directions concerning the employment and command of our offensive forces in support of the Army front:

1. Attacks from the sea against the coast behind our frontline are also to be expected to support enemy land attacks on the Gotenkopf position.

- 2.

2. Purely defensive operations by our own naval forces on patrol duty do not bring any relief to the Army front and leave the initiative with the enemy.

3. Our forces must therefore be employed offensively:

- a. In close cooperation with the Air Force, against enemy naval forces and transports prior to any enemy operations and during crossing.

- b. With the Army, to investigate possibilities of intercepting enemy plans and drawing enemy forces from the Army front by mock landing operations behind the enemy's coastal flank or if possible also by well-prepared small landing operations or efficient bombardment of the right Russian flank from the sea."

"Subject: Command of offensive operations and offensive weapons by Admiral, Black Sea.

Events of the last few weeks have led me to reach the following conclusions:

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1. Combined employment of various offensive vessels such as E-boats, MAS-boats, U-boats and, if possible, also motor minesweepers and aircraft is necessary for maximum efficiency. Such co-operation must be controlled by one single command during the entire operation; otherwise, the individual operations would not exploit all the operational possibilities.
  2. Reports on the employment of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and motor minesweepers on 16 April, of motor minesweepers and E-boats, and also motor minesweepers and MAS-boats on 17 April, of motor minesweepers and E-boats on 20 April and 24 April and of 2 groups of E-boats on 30 April and 6 May did not give evidence of any operational co-operation.
  3. One single operational order issued before sailing is not sufficient for an intended joint operation by various offensive naval forces. Individual actions must be surveyed from a joint command station, so that tactics can be altered according to the changing enemy situation or according to the disposition of our own forces or to Air Force operations.
  4. During the operation, Admiral, Black Sea can alone perceive the changes in the enemy situation and the simultaneous progress of individual actions in various areas. The separate groups at sea do not have all the data necessary for the execution of a joint operation.
  5. Control of joint operations by Admiral, Black Sea is only possible if all our naval forces report continuously on the enemy situation and on the progress of their own operations. An immediate report should be made when the enemy is encountered or if our boats are themselves detected by the enemy. In this type of short operation off the Caucasus coast, the danger of bearings being taken on short signals transmitted during the operation when not engaged by the enemy is considered to be very slight."
3. Attention is again drawn to the order that the first copy of the War Diary should be submitted to Naval Staff and the second and third copies via Group South.

For Naval Group Command South

Chief of Staff

(Signed) Brinkmann.



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