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UNITED STATES NAVY

WAR DIARY OF ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA



1 NOVEMBER, 1943-30 NOVEMBER, 1943
PG NUMBERS 31543/a-31543/b

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

1 - 30 NOVEMBER 1943

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

1955

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.

1 November 1943

Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping was observed in the course of daylight reconnaissance over the central and eastern Black Sea.

Three coastal vessels (400 tons), 1 freighter of 3,000-4,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,500 tons, 1 Turkish troopship and 3 sailing vessels were sighted inside Turkish territorial waters.

In the Sea of Azov 1 boat heading north and another heading south were observed west of Logoveshchenskaya. Off Kuchugury 1 motor gunboat heading west and 1 heading east were sighted.

Enemy shipping in ports on the Caucasus coast:

Tuapse: 3 motor minesweepers, 6 M.T.B.s, 3 small armed vessels, 3 freighters, 1 patrol vessel, 5 coastal vessels and lighters totaling 1,200 tons, 34 pontoons and 36 boats.

Ghelenjik: 3 motor minesweepers, 9 M.T.B.s, 2 motor gunboats, 5 motor landing craft, 8 coastal vessels, 2 small armed vessels and 25 boats.

Novorossisk: 2 motor landing craft, 1 tug and 9 boats.

Anapa: 2 motor minesweepers, 5 M.T.B.s, 7 motor landing craft, 1 coastal vessel, 1 small armed vessel and 9 boats.

Wesselovka: 5 motor minesweepers, 5 motor landing craft, 5 tugs, 1 coastal vessel and 6 boats.

Taman: 7 motor gunboats, 3 M.T.B.s, 20 small armed vessels, 7 motor landing craft and 2 tugs.

Sea of Azov: Senaya and Yeisk: No shipping, Chushka Spit: 4 boats.

Ilitch: 1 coastal vessel.

Gluchoi channel: 3 M.T.B.s, 5 motor landing craft, 12 pontoon ferries, 5 pontoons and 18 boats. In Achuevski, Sadki and Primorsko there were 1 small armed vessel, 1 coastal vessel and 107 boats

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported 1 destroyer in the southeastern Black Sea, probably coming from the northeast and 2 minesweepers and several M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers off the northern and southern parts of the east coast.

Five submarines are thought to be in the operational area of the northwestern Black Sea along the west coast of the Crimea.

Commander, Naval Air, Crimea reported that enemy reconnaissance squadrons which have hitherto been based in Gudauty have probably been transferred to the Novorossisk/Ghelenjik area. In future enemy air reconnaissance as far as the Constantza-Odessa-Nikolaiev area may be expected.

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Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Eupatoria - Odessa: NE winds, force 3, fair, visibility 12 miles, early morning mist.

Western Black Sea:

The 4 Italian E-boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla in Nikolaiev will sail to Galatz via Odessa for a period in dock.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to send 2 naval ferry barges for the urgent transportation of Army ammunition from Kikeneiz to Sevastopol. Further arrangements will be made by Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast.

Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla has suggested transferring the base for E-boat operations from Ivan Baba to Sevastopol or even to Balaklava because of the continuous danger of air raids. I have rejected this proposal because we must do everything in our power to hold on to the Crimea, and 1st E-Boat Flotilla, which plays an important part in the battle, must operate from the base which is geographically the most suitable. This is Ivan Baba, which has all the requisite resources of manpower and equipment and offers every facility for maintaining the boats in fit condition for sea. I have no intention of even reducing the number of boats in this base.

After the order to evacuate Skadovsk had been given, Naval Harbor Master, Skadovsk asked for 2 naval ferry barges to be placed at his disposal to transport the radio equipment of the Naval Communications Officer and to evacuate his own personnel. The Naval ferry barges F 127 and F 560 sailed from Odessa at 2300 on 31 October for this purpose. On 1 November F 127 reported that F 560 had run aground outside the harbor at Skadovsk. Investigations are being made to ascertain whether the boats had already been loaded. As the Army has commenced evacuating the area west of the Perekop Isthmus, Naval Port Commander, Ochakov has requested orders to blow up the lighthouse and living quarters on withdrawing from Tendra Peninsula. The order will be given.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, Sevastopol has been ordered to remain in Sevastopol with 3 fully equipped boats at the disposal of Admiral, Black Sea after completing clearance of minefield S 47.

South Coast Crimea and Kerch Peninsula:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that at about 0300 on 1 November a regiment of Russian troops landed in Kerch Strait in the area of Janysh-Takil and near Eltigen. At about 0500 another landing attempt involving some 30 boats was made near Yenikale. The enemy was met with fire from our own batteries and was forced to withdraw behind a smoke screen. At sunset the

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beachhead had not yet been mopped up, but had been reduced in size to a strip of about 3 km. along the coast, 700 meters in length. The small force which landed in Janysh-Takil was annihilated. A second landing attempt near Yenikale was frustrated by our gunfire. Our boats on patrol did not observe anything of the landing near Eltigen because they were stationed off Kerch Bay, where the threat of invasion was considered to be extra great.

(Marginal comment in pencil: "Consequently a mistake. Concentration of Russian landing craft in Taman and Temriuk was known. Signed. Naval Liaison Officer to General Staff." Tr.N.)

At 1330 the following patrol orders were sent to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus:

1. If the enemy beachhead near Eltigen is not mopped up by the evening, all naval ferry barges in Kerch will take up positions off the beachhead to prevent further supplies or reinforcements arriving.
2. If the enemy force is liquidated, the naval ferry barges will occupy patrol lines between Kamish Durun and Janysh-Takil because the danger of a landing is much greater there than between Kamish Durun and Yenikale.

Towards evening the news was received that the enemy is still occupying a strip of the coastline 3 km. in length. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered:

1. To dispatch the naval ferry barges in Kerch to patrol lines off the beachhead.
2. To send the 2 boats at the eastern end of the patrol line off the south coast of the Kerch Peninsula into Kerch Strait to patrol between Cape Takil and Chongelek.
3. To distribute the remaining 4 naval ferry barges in patrol line in two groups of two off the south coast between Cape Chauda and Kys Kul.

It is not intended to carry out E-boat operations inside Kerch Strait, as the operation of both naval ferry barges and E-boats in these narrow waters would cause confusion, especially as enemy light naval forces would probably appear as well. Moreover, it is not possible for the crews of the naval, and more particularly the Army, shore batteries to distinguish between our own E-boats and the M.T.L.s, motor minesweepers and motor gunboats of the enemy. The E-boats must be retained for their original purpose of torpedo operations as long as other solutions can be found.

1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to keep 3 boats at immediate readiness from 2200 to 0300 during the night of 1/2 November.

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As 2 groups of 2 naval ferry barges from the south coast of Kerch Peninsula will sail into Kerch Strait (as mentioned above), the 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla at immediate readiness were given orders at 2000 to sail at 2200 to patrol from Drown 14 to 36° 10 E. The boats will remain at the patrol line until 0400 and will prevent further enemy landing attempts. Boats are free to attack submarines. 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be informed of the positions of our naval ferry barges.

At 0150 U 24 reported a convoy 28 miles southwest of Cape Pitsunda, speed 12.5 knots, course south.

Fan-of-three misfired, cause not yet discovered. The boat was recognized.

Enemy Air Activity:

There were air raids on Eupatoria, Sevastopol, Simferopol and Kerch. Only damage reported was to some buildings in Theodosia (Port Commander, Naval Control Service and sick quarters).

Minesweeping Activity:

During the early hours of 1 November, minefield S 73 was laid according to plan in Theodosia Bay. The motor minesweeper (RA) group is returning to Sevastopol.

Further minesweeping by FZ-boats off Sevastopol was hindered by bad weather.

Minesweeping planes flew over the Leresanski channel several times without result.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys proceeded according to plan and without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy or neutral shipping was detected in the course of night reconnaissance over the northeastern Black Sea and daylight reconnaissance over the central Black Sea and along the Turkish coast.

Compared with the photographic reconnaissance report on harbors along the northern Caucasus coast and Taman Peninsula in yesterday's War Diary, this latest reconnaissance shows a considerable decrease in the number of small naval vessels and motor landing craft in the harbors along the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov, and in the number of landing craft and tugs in Anapa.

Main Naval D/F Station reported shortly after 1000 that a gunboat, a minesweeper and 3 M.T.E.s had received a radio position report on a vessel 15 miles south of Tuapse. In the course of

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the day further individual position reports on an unidentified vessel off the central east coast were intercepted.

Otherwise no change in motor minesweeper and M.T.B. activity from the central to northern parts of the east coast and on both sides of Kach Peninsula. In this area radio traffic from 2 minesweepers and 1 gunboat was also intercepted.

Three submarines were detected in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters southwest of the Crimea. Another submarine was intercepted putting to sea, position unknown. Destroyer G is still at sea, probably off the central or southern part of the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Eupatoria - Novorossisk and Sea of Azov: N - NE winds, force 3- 4, during the night 4 -3, fair, visibility 20 miles.

The results of the air reconnaissance of Caucasus ports on 1 November were not radioed to Commander, Naval Air until 2 November, so that their tactical value was largely lost. 4th Air Force was therefore requested to approve that Commander, Naval Air, Black Sea be informed of reconnaissance flights to be made, and that the evaluation of aerial photographs be made in Sarabus.

4th Air Force has refused this on the ground that the plane has to carry out reconnaissance over the land at the same time, but has promised that in future the results will be transmitted at once.

Western Black Sea:

Naval ferry barge No. 322 sailed from Odessa to try to refloat naval ferry barge No. 560 which ran aground off the harbor entrance at Skadovsk. Naval ferry barge No. 127 also assisted in the attempt but by the evening all attempts, although undisturbed by the enemy, had been unsuccessful. Naval Harbor Master, Ochakov reported that on the morning of 2 November the base at Tandra was successfully evacuated and the quarters demolished. Despite blasting the lighthouse did not collapse but is now completely burnt out.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts and Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla were ordered to speed up the laying of minefield S 47. The area is only to be checked, not actually swept. The Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will be available for this operation only until the evening of 2 November.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla received orders to place naval ferry barges (mines) F 419, F 445 and F 447 at the disposal of Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla for the mine-laying operation on 4 November in Koktebel Bay and Laraken Bay, which is aimed at preventing possible enemy landings. (For further details see Appendix to Admiral, Black Sea 287 A I dated 2 November, 1943.) The naval ferry barges will be loaded as follows on arriving at Sevastopol:

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2 naval ferry barges both with 75 UMI mines, 1 naval ferry barge with 50 UMI mines and 50 explosive floats. Loading is to be speeded up so that the minelaying boats and the motor minesweepers (RM) are ready to sail at 1500 on 3 November.

"Ship 19" which sailed from Ak Mechet on anti-submarine patrol and was 10 miles west of Ak Mechet at 0705 reported that she was searching for 2 manned lighters belonging to the freight towing vessel "Theben" and requested the support of air reconnaissance. Another report received at 0917 stated that "Ship 19" had discovered both the lighters 21 miles northwest of Ak Mechet and had begun to tow them to Ak Mechet. At 1630 "Ship 19" will put out again on anti-submarine patrol.

At 1600 lighter No. 1293 was torpedoed in Ak Mechet Bay and had to be beached there. The fact that submarines are now appearing off Ak Mechet as well proves how urgent it is to carry out long, systematic anti-submarine patrols.

South Coast Crimea and Kerch Peninsula:

The boats ordered to occupy the patrol lines in Kerch Strait off the Eltigen beachhead during the night of 1/2 November were there from 2215 to 0300. No enemy boats were observed off the coast. The 2 boats which should have been at the eastern end of the patrol line off the south coast could not reach their position south of the beachhead because of recurrent engine failure and a heavy swell. The 3 E-boats which were to patrol off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula sailed from Ivan Daba at 2200 and arrived at their first position off Cape Chauda at 2304. In the existing weather conditions the boats could hardly have used their armament. They entered Ivan Daba at 0440 without incident.

I have sent the following standing order to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus with effect until the Eltigen beachhead is mopped up:

1. Four naval ferry barges will be stationed in Kerch and 4 in Kamish Turun.
2. The naval ferry barges in Kerch will sail daily, passing through Pavlovski channel at dusk. The craft will remain off the enemy beachhead to prevent further landings and will arrange return passage to Kerch to pass through Pavlovski channel at dawn.
3. The naval ferry barges based in Kamish Turun will sail at dusk and will remain off the Eltigen beachhead until the arrival of the naval ferry barges in para. 2. The boats will then proceed to the patrol line between Chongelek and Cape Takil, and on returning to Kamish Turun in the morning, will pass Eltigen at dawn.
4. Two naval ferry barges will occupy patrol lines between Cape Opuk and Cape Takil from dusk to dawn each night. During the daytime they will anchor close to the coast, if possible under cover of our own batteries (anti-aircraft protection).

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5. Admiral, Black Sea will give orders for additional patrol lines to be occupied by motor minesweepers and E-boats along the south coast of the Kerch Peninsula.
6. Lieutenant Commander, Mehler, Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla is hereby appointed in charge of patrol operations in Kerch Strait, and will be stationed in Kerch.

Attempts will be made to secure further naval ferry barges for these duties.

At present the situation at the Eltigen beachhead is as follows:

1. Statements from prisoners-of-war indicate that the strength of the enemy in the Eltigen beachhead is approximately 1,400 men. No new landings were made during the night of 1/2 November. Few reinforcements have been sent to the beachhead. The enemy is fighting stubbornly and is being backed up by artillery fire from the eastern shore and by numerous ground attack planes. The Russians have absolute air supremacy over the battle area. Our own attacks have reduced the beachhead to a length of 1.5 km. along the shore. It is expected that the enemy will bring over reinforcements after nightfall.
2. No further attacks on the Perokop Isthmus, but new enemy concentrations were observed. The enemy ferried some 2,000 men across the Sivash and occupied Tarkhan and Ashkadan. Countermeasures are being taken.

During the night of 2/3 November, 7 naval ferry barges will form a patrol line in Kerch Strait and 2 naval ferry barges and 3 E-boats will occupy a patrol line off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula.

As the mines for minefields K 16 and K 17 have now arrived in Kerch, Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla has been ordered to lay K 17 with 2 naval ferry barges (mines) assigned to the patrol line off Eltigen. On completion of the operation, the craft will proceed to their patrol position. If the mines cannot be loaded and primed by 1/30, the operation will be postponed until the night of 3/4 November.

New Orders for Shore Batteries:

A. 5th Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 14.

1. The three 7.62 cm. guns (swivel mounting) which have been transported from Genichesk to Eupatoria have been stored in Eupatoria with 6th Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 601.
2. The battery will be equipped with four new 7.62 cm. field guns and has been ordered to report for duty in Armiansk with the Army Artillery Commander, General Weber.

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- B. 3rd Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 614, the guns of which were worn out, has been transferred from DJANKO to Chongar and equipped with four new 7.62 cm. field guns. The battery will operate in the area of 330th Infantry Division.
- C. Temporary Establishment of a 6th Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 614:
1. Lieutenant (Gunnery) Niemeyer, German Naval Reserve, formerly of the Training Establishment, Eupatoria was ordered to establish a battery of four 4 cm. Bofors (wheel mounting) at Simferopol.
 2. The gun crews were drawn from personnel of the Training Establishment, Eupatoria together with some anti-aircraft experts of Ship's Anti-Aircraft Detachment, making a total of 27 men, including non-commissioned officers.
 3. The battery has been allocated to 17th Army H.Q. which will be responsible for its operation.

The 7.62 cm. field guns mentioned under A. 2. and B. were taken from a store of 30 guns of the same type which were intended for use as anti-landing guns on the coast, especially in the Anapa area and on the shore of the Sea of Azov.

The 4cm. Bofors anti-aircraft guns were delivered as replacements for 3.7 cm. anti-aircraft guns (swivel mounting) and were intended to serve as armament afloat.

At 1400 U 24 made a weather report in air grid square 4587 as ordered (NE winds, force 4, sea. 3-4). U 24 also reported her E.T.A. at rendezvous point for Constantza escort as 0500, 4 November.

The boats in the operational area have been informed of the results of photographic reconnaissance of the Caucasus ports. U 9 was informed of a message decoded by Radio Intercept Service in which her own position had obviously been transmitted to a Russian anti-submarine group.

Enemy Air Activity:

From 1410 to 1450 there was a series of air raids on the city and port area of Sevastopol. Ten planes flew over and dropped about 35 bombs. Some casualties, but no damage reported. It is thought that mines were laid outside the harbor, so the outgoing channel from Sevastopol up to the buoy has been closed by Naval Port Commander.

Minesweeping Activity:

Nothing to report from planes sweeping the Danube.

FZ-boats checked the area off Sevastopol for ground mines. The boats covered the area 21 times with towed loop gear without result.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys ran as scheduled without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy or neutral shipping was detected by air reconnaissance off the north Caucasus coast during the night of 2/3 November or over the entire Black Sea including Turkish coastal waters during the day. Brisk enemy ferry traffic was observed between Kossa Chushka and the north coast of Kerch Peninsula during the day. No reconnaissance was made of harbors in the Sea of Azov because of the weather.

Enemy Shipping in Port:

Ochenchiri: 6 ships and 1 floating dock.

Chobi estuary: 10 merchant ships.

Tuapse: 1 motor minesweeper, 9 M.T.B.s, 3 freighters, 9 coastal vessels, 6 small armed vessels, 19 half pontoons, 1 armed vessel with harbor boom, 1 floating crane and 26 boats.

Ghelenjik: 1 minesweeper, 4 motor minesweepers, 4 M.T.B.s, 15 motor landing craft and 2 half pontoons, 5 small armed vessels, 1 freighter, 5 coastal vessels, 2 lighters, 1 fueling buoy and 26 boats.

Novorossisk: 3 tugs for motor landing craft, 7 motor landing craft and 9 boats.

Anapa: 24 small ships and boats (no substantial change since 1 November). Reconnaissance of Anapa at noon revealed 5 motor minesweepers, 3 M.T.B.s, 3 coastal vessels and about 20 small boats.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria again reported moderate M.T.B. and motor minesweeper activity (radio traffic from 9 boats was intercepted) off the northern part of the east coast and in the waters near Kerch Strait. Slight activity off the central and southern parts of the east coast.

Five submarines were detected in the northwestern Black Sea and in the waters to the west and southwest of the Crimea. One submarine was detected in the eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

Between 2025 and 0315 on the night of 2/3 November, the naval ferry barges on patrol in Kerch Strait had ten encounters with light enemy naval forces. In the course of these engagements 1 enemy landing craft was sunk, 1 motor launch set on fire and 2 other motor gunboats damaged. Because of other engagements going on at the same time, our boats could not pursue the enemy and take prisoners. It is probable that more of the enemy boats were damaged or destroyed. Some of the fighting was at such close quarters that automatic weapons and hand grenades were used. Our own vessels suffered only minor damage. Further enemy supplies may have been prevented from getting through. Our naval ferry barges did not observe any reinforcements reaching the Altigen beachhead.

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Enemy forces landed near Shukovka south of Fonar and occupied the coast between Kilometers 81 and 84 to a depth of 300 meters. (Tr.N.: Marginal comment in pencil reads: Our defenses were not able to prevent this. Why not? There was no question of naval forces in that area. The minefields in the northern part of Kerch Strait were of no use. Signed. Naval Liaison Officer to General Staff.) The strength of the enemy is not yet known, but is thought to be considerable. Contact has been lost with 5th and 6th Batteries, Naval Gunnery Detachment 13 whose sites lie inside the beachhead established by the enemy.

In view of these new developments in the situation during the night of 2/3 November, we may expect further landings in the southern part of Kerch Strait. Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was therefore ordered to set up a patrol line of 3 boats close to the coast between Cape Takil and 45° 11' N during the night of 3/4 November.

Other patrols will be as follows:

Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla in two groups of two off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula between Elchan Kane cliffs and Cape Takil.

Four naval ferry barges in Kerch Strait between 45° 11' N and 45° 15' N.

One naval ferry barge in Kerch Bay and 5 between Yenikale and Cape Fonar.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was given full details of the positions of our patrols, which are concentrating on the beachheads already established in order to prevent the enemy from landing further supplies.

At noon the Crimea situation had developed as follows:

The enemy forces which had infiltrated across the Sivash had been halted but were receiving continuous reinforcements. During the night of 2/3 November, about 20 enemy tanks carrying infantry penetrated south across the Tartar Ditch. An old enemy tank pocket northwest of Armiensk was reduced in size by our own attacks. Since daybreak our own troops have been making an attack to mop up the enemy beachhead near Eltigen.

In the landing at the northern end of Kerch Strait a stretch of the coast 8 km. wide between Cape Fonar and Yenikale was taken by the enemy. Even now the strength of the enemy cannot be estimated, but, as mentioned above, it seems to be considerable. This is confirmed by the fact that the enemy has gained terrain in the course of the forenoon. After dawn further troops were brought across the sea under cover of artillery fire. Attempts are being made to seal off the enemy troops which have landed, though the forces at present available will hardly be adequate for this. Admiral, Black Sea detailed the following forces to support 17th Army H.Q. ashore:

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Four batteries of Naval Gunnery Detachment 614 in the isthmuses of Perekop and Chenar; some 150 men of the Black Sea Legion (reserve volunteers) near Perekop; a newly established battery of four 4 cm. Bofors guns for use at the Sivash; fifteen 7.62 cm. field guns and a further 200 men previously attached to Caucasus naval port commanders or to batteries which have had to be disbanded.

Admiral, Black Sea has given orders for the following forces to be drafted to the Army on detached duty, so that a new infantry reserve may be built up:

1. 5% of all naval shore units.
2. More personnel from batteries which are not yet ready for action.
3. Several motor vehicle columns.

At 1800 the situation had developed as follows:

Countermeasures with infantry and tanks are being taken against the enemy infiltration on the northern isthmus of the Crimea. Our own troops are weak in numbers and exhausted.

The bridgehead north of Kerch has penetrated inland as far as Taksy. During the day the enemy numbers increased, to 2,000 - 3,000 men. The Eltinen beachhead has been narrowed down but has not yet been decisively mopped up.

Now that the naval ferry barges used in the present evacuation ordered by Commanding General, Armed Forces have returned after completing their duties, there are at present 10 naval ferry barges in Kerch Strait. Four more naval ferry barges were transferred from Sevastopol to Theodosia during the night of 2/3 November for operations in Kerch Strait. All available naval ferry barges are therefore in action. Four more naval ferry barges are en route to the Crimea from the west coast, and further craft will be sent when possible. Arrangements have been made with Army Group A concerning shipping space required for the new supply situation. Commander, Convoys and Escorts has been advised of the particular importance of convoy protection.

A final draft of 300 men from the Navy has been sent for duty with the Army.

As I see it, the principal duties of the Navy will be to support Army operations in Kerch Strait, to patrol off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula and to conduct offensive operations against the enemy at sea.

At 2300:

Continuous reinforcements reaching the beachhead north of Kerch have brought the strength of enemy forces there up to well over 3,000 men. The enemy's preparations to ferry across heavy armament and tanks seem to be completed. A concentrated attack in the early hours of 4 November is expected.

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In the late afternoon our own attack halted. Because of the weather there was only minor enemy air activity.

Enemy attacks north of Armiansk were repulsed. The enemy numbers have increased in the infiltration south of the Tartar Ditch. Twenty tanks were shot up in this area.

The enemy position south of the Sivash near Ashkafan was narrowed down still further and the dominating position is in our hands.

Weather forecast:

NE to E winds, force 4 - 5, at night 4, fair, visibility 20 miles.

Western Black Sea:

4th Air Force reports that there will be an increase in our own air traffic between Rumania and the Crimea. All ships and commands will be informed to this effect in order to prevent firing at our own planes.

The present situation in the Crimea demands the employment of all naval forces which can be released from their present duties. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has been ordered to report immediately the number of motor minesweepers in 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla which could be released from convoy duties, taking the strictest view possible.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea will transfer naval ferry barges Nos. 559, 594, 342 and 573 from Constantza to Sevastopol as ordered. The boats will sail from Constantza under escort at 1300.

Effective on 3 November, 2 harbor defense vessels of Harbor Defense Flotilla, Ochakov and 1 naval ferry barge will be employed to check all boats afloat between Ochakov and Kherson. Boats will be commandeered and, if not fit for use, destroyed.

Naval ferry barge F 560 which ran aground on 1 November outside the harbor at Skalovsk could not be refloated because of the enemy situation. Confidential books and all armament except the 7.5 cm. gun have been salvaged, instruments on board have been taken away and the engines destroyed. A report from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Danube Delta, states that it was not considered necessary to destroy the craft as she could not sail again. No casualties. At 1430 about 4 - 5 miles south of Klarovka, naval ferry barges F 406 and F 581, proceeding in convoy from Olessa to Ak Mechet, were fired on by shore artillery. F 581 was slightly damaged.

Naval Port Commander, Sevastopol reports that the harbor entrance, which had been closed because of suspected mines, was opened again at 1230.

South Coast Crimea:

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to dispatch naval ferry barges Nos. 304, 211, 574 and 386 to Theodosia immediately for operations in Kerch Strait. They will sail at 2100.

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The 3 boats of the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla which sailed from Sevastopol arrived in Theodosia and will occupy patrol lines in Kerch Strait during the coming night.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to lay minefield S 47 as quickly as possible. Further delay caused by minesweeping ordered by him cannot be countenanced. If necessary, the preliminary check of the proposed minefield area is to be waived. (See also War Diary 2 November.)

At 0700 Naval Shore Commander, Crimea reported that a submarine had fired 2 torpedoes at 2 naval ferry barges which were putting out from Yalta to the west. Both torpedoes missed and are lying on the beach unexploded.

Kerch Strait:

Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla reported that minefield K 17 in Kerch Strait was laid according to plan.

After 32 days at sea U 9 is scheduled to commence return passage during the early hours of 4 November. Her former position will not be occupied by another boat. U 9 was therefore ordered to lay one MMS mine in air grid square 9415 and to proceed to Constantza via the northern route.

U 23 will remain in the operational area north of Tuapse as far as Chelengkik because at present the advantage of having the boat immediately at hand in the event of large-scale landings or enemy fleet operations against the southern Crimea outweighs the disadvantage of there being only slight traffic in this area.

Minesweeping Activity:

Minesweeping planes made several sweeps in the Danube and in the waters off Ochakov, while FZ-boats checked the area off Sevastopol several times. No mines swept.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys proceeded according to plan in the western Black Sea. Because of the weather there was some delay in convoys sailing from the western ports of the Crimea to ports in the north-western Black Sea.

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Siniferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping was detected in the course of night reconnaissance over the central and eastern Black Sea. During the day only minor enemy shipping movements along the Caucasus coast. Moderate neutral shipping traffic close to the Turkish coast. At 1150 large oil patches were observed 2 miles south of Cape Sarich. This probably has something to do with the damaging of one of 3 submarines which had been detected on 2 November in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters to the southwest of the Crimea.

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At 1235 1st Air Corps reported 2 enemy merchant vessels, each 1,500 tons, with fighter escort 35 miles southwest of Sochi and 2 motor minesweepers steering northerly courses, medium speed.

Compared with 1 and 3 November, aerial photographs showed no important change in the amount of shipping at Anapa and Novocrossisk. In Ghelenjik a decrease in the number of small naval vessels was noticed, and in Tuapse 34 pontoon ferries had disappeared and the number of small naval vessels had increased.

A radio intercept report stated that at 2020 the position of a vessel 11 miles south of Cape Pitsunda was transmitted to 2 minesweepers.

At 0633 "Ship 19" reported destroying an enemy submarine 5 miles south of Tendra Peninsula.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

NE winds, force 4, locally 5, cloudy, visibility 12 miles, fog banks at night.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

The very bad weather for small ships (ground swell and winds freshening to ENE up to force 6) made it very difficult for our E-boats, motor minesweepers and naval ferry barges to maintain their patrol lines in the southern part of Kerch Strait and off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula. After 2300 the boats could no longer use their armament. All the patrols had to break off their operations at 2400 because of the sudden approach of a NE gale, force 8.

General situation in the early morning:

The naval ferry barges and motor minesweepers in patrol line in Kerch Strait had several engagements with the enemy. In the north off the Fonar-Yenikale beachhead our naval ferry barges forced some enemy landing craft to withdraw to the east. Three of the enemy boats were damaged by gunfire. In the south our motor minesweepers sank 1 motor launch. No damage to our own boats.

Nothing was sighted by the middle patrol line, nor by the E-boat patrols off the south coast of the Crimea.

Hence enemy supply traffic to the beachheads was seriously interrupted last night, if not cut off altogether, for it can be assumed with a considerable degree of certainty that the weather would have forced the enemy convoys to turn back after our boats had abandoned the patrol lines.

Ashore all was quiet on all fronts during the night of 3/4 November. Since daybreak enemy pressure in the Kerch Strait beachhead has increased northeastwards towards Soksy.

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Situation in the evening:

Since 0600 an enemy attack has been going on south of Perekop towards the west and south. Very heavy fighting is going on against an enemy vastly superior in numbers. The situation is very serious. The enemy is backing up the attack with salvo-guns and artillery. Twelve enemy tanks have been put out of action.

At the northern end of Kerch Strait near the Daksy beachhead our own weak forces are engaged in bitter fighting against an enemy far superior in numbers. Front line runs as follows: Cape Kany, Duanko; a hill west of Daksy, hill 114.1. Cape Varsovka recaptured. Enemy strength is now about 2 divisions of infantry. (Tr. N.: Marginal note in pencil in handwriting of Naval Liaison Officer to General Staff reads: "Ferried over in 2 days".)

In the afternoon an enemy attack from the Eltigen beachhead was repulsed.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla were ordered to occupy the following patrol lines during the night of 4/5 November:

- a. 3 naval ferry barges between Cape Fenar and Cape Chroni,
- b. 5 naval ferry barges between Yenikale and Cape Fenar,
- c. 1 naval ferry barge between Point 10 and Point 11, concentrating on the waters off Kolonka mole.

Boats under a. and b. will sail so that Yenikale is passed at about 1300. The naval ferry barges under c. will be on patrol at 1800. The naval ferry barges under a. will leave their patrol line at daybreak and will anchor close inshore in the bay west of Cape Chroni, weather permitting. The naval ferry barges under b. and c. will leave their patrol lines at 0330 and put in to Kerch. The duty of all these patrols is to prevent further reinforcements reaching the Mayak beachhead and to frustrate further landing attempts. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will be informed that 3 E-boats and 3 motor minesweepers will be on patrol between Kemish Durun and Cape Takil.

The order referring to the time at which naval ferry barges on patrol shall return to port has been extended to cover fog conditions. If fog come down at daybreak, the boats will remain in position until it clears. As a general principle, also, the boats will remain in patrol line as long as possible.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla were ordered to occupy the following patrol lines on the night of 4/5 November:

1. 3 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla in the southern part of Kerch Strait between $45^{\circ} 11' N$ and $45^{\circ} 17' N$ concentrating on the waters off the Eltigen beachhead, and 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla between $45^{\circ} 6' N$ and $45^{\circ} 10' N$.

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2. 2 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla off the south coast of Kerch Peninsula between points Brown 16 and 17.

Motor minesweepers and E-boats under 1. will pass point Brown 18 at about 1800. E-boats under 2. will be at the patrol line from 2000.

Duties: To prevent enemy landings and to attack all enemy forces. E-boats and motor minesweepers will leave the patrol line at 0330 and return to Ivan Daba and Theodosia respectively. If fog comes down at daybreak the motor minesweepers and E-boats will remain in position until it clears. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla reports that from experience gained during the night of 3/4 November a landing of our own troops from naval ferry barges in the rear of the enemy between Yenikale and Cape Fonar is considered possible.

I reported this immediately to Commanding General, 17th Army H.Q. and was informed that he could not take any action because the necessary troops were not available. (Marginal note in handwriting of Naval Liaison Officer to General Staff reads: "What a pity!" Tr.N.)

Western Black Sea:

- a. Three naval ferry barges are proceeding from Constantza to Sevastopol for duty in Crimean waters.

In response to a request from Army Group 4 for 4 naval ferry barges to be provided for the immediate transportation of ammunition from Odessa to Sevastopol, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has been ordered to detail 2 boats for this operation and to report their numbers and E.T.A. at Odessa to Admiral, Black Sea and to Sea Transportation Office, Nikolaiev.

- b. As a precautionary measure, Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine has been ordered to transfer to Odessa all boats under naval command lying in the harbor and dockyard of Nikolaiev, provided that they are not actually required for defense or transportation. Furthermore all naval ships in Kherson which are not required for duty there and which can put to sea, including those undergoing repairs, are to be transferred to Odessa with all speed.

These measures are being taken because of the uncertain situation ashore and in view of the fact that the Russians are already on the southern bank of the Dnieper estuary and are thus in a position to disrupt our shipping in the bay.

- c. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Danube Delta has been ordered to find out immediately whether naval gunnery lighter No. MAL 4 in the Dnieper estuary could be anchored and used as a floating battery should the engine be completely out of action.

South Coast Crimea and Kerch Peninsula:

Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported that at 1600 4 motor minesweepers (RM) and 3 naval ferry barges (mines) sailed from Sevastopol to Theodosia to lay mines in Koktebel Bay and Tarkent Bay. Four naval ferry barges are proceeding from Sevastopol to Theodosia to reinforce the patrols in Kerch Strait.

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Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla was ordered to transfer S 42 and one other E-boat to Balaklava to operate against enemy forces along the south coast of the Crimea when E-boats S 26, S 45 and S 72 have arrived in Ivan Daba from their overhaul in Constantza (precautionary measure). Naval Harbor Master, Balaklava is to secure accommodation ashore for the crews from the evening of 5 November onwards and is to arrange for the camouflaging of the boats.

A report from Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla states that during the night of 3/4 November motor minesweepers on patrol between Takil and Chonjolek were continually being picked up by our own coastal searchlights, and were thus forced to make recognition signals. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been ordered to take immediate measures to ensure that the need for recognition signals is reduced to an absolute minimum.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was also instructed to give orders for M1 mines to be laid along the Kolonka mole immediately by 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. (This measure is necessary because the Russians may suddenly occupy the mole.)

One naval ferry barge (mines) is to be loaded with 60 M1 mines for emergency laying in the Kerch harbor and the approaches thereto should evacuation become necessary. Clockwork setting switch - 1 hour. Period delay mechanism setting of each to half of delay mechanism 1 or 3. After loading, the naval ferry barge is to be camouflaged. In the event of Kerch being evacuated, this naval ferry barge will be the last boat to leave the port and will lay the mines in accordance with the orders of Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla. Allowance must be made for the minimum depth of water and safety distance of 90 meters.

U 9 radioed: "At 0657 enemy submarine in air grid square 6424, course east". At 0820 Radio Intercept Service deciphered a signal made to Anapa from the returning Russian submarine "Paul" (M class) referring to the position of an enemy vessel in 44° 04' N, 36° 56' E, course 270°. The boats must therefore have sighted each other and made a signal at the same time.

At 1115 U 24 entered Constantza without escort after an operational cruise, having missed her rendezvous because of fog banks along the coast. U 20 reported that she would be ready to put out on 7 November with her new commander, Lieutenant (j.g.) Grafen.

The Air Force report on the convoy consisting of 2 merchant vessels, both of 1,500 tons, in grid square 9475, course northwest, again shows that the Russians are routing their big ship convoys well out to sea - in this case 35 miles off the coast. In future this fact will have to be taken into consideration when submarine operations are being planned.

Minesweeping Activity:

Further minesweeping by 4 motor minesweepers off Sevastopol was handicapped by unfavorable weather conditions.

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Supply Traffic:

Tug "Lubeck", which had been reported missing from the convoy proceeding from Sevastopol to Odessa, entered Odessa with lighter "Elvendi" at 2300. Otherwise nothing to report concerning convoys along the south coast of the Crimea and in the western Black Sea.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

During the day there was no enemy or neutral shipping from the western to central Black Sea or close to the Turkish coast. Night reconnaissance detected a vessel, type unidentified, in Kobarlinka Bay near Koverossisk.

No reconnaissance was made of ports in the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov or along the Caucasus coast.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported continuous H.T.D. and motor minesweeper activity off the northern part of the east coast as far as Kerch Strait. One minesweeper coming from the southeast and 1 destroyer which had probably sailed from Tuapse were detected off the central east coast. Three minesweepers and some H.T.D.s were the only vessels in the southern Black Sea.

Radio Intercept Service reported 1 submarine in the operational area of the northwestern Black Sea. Three more submarines are thought to be in the same area.

As far as can be ascertained, the submarine which was destroyed yesterday 2 miles south of Cape Sarich was a boat either of the "A" class or of an unknown class and had been in the operational area since 23 October.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

NE winds, force 6 - 7, visibility 6 - 10 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

The following incidents are reported from the patrol lines in the northern and southern parts of Kerch Strait and off the Eltigen beachhead, involving our E-boats, motor minesweepers and naval ferry barges:

At the northern end of the Strait, south of Yenikale, our naval ferry barges were held in the beams of enemy searchlights and accurately shelled by three 10.5 - 15 cm. batteries on Kossa Chushka and by light batteries at Yenikale, but suffered neither casualties nor losses. In face of very heavy fire and in bad weather the 2 naval ferry barge groups made three attempts to break through the channel which is only 4,000 meters wide. Further attempts had to be abandoned because of the NE gale (up to force 8) which arose about midnight.

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During the night of 4/5 November the 3 boats of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla on patrol off the Eltigen beachhead had several engagements with the enemy. At about 2230 the boats fought off 5 enemy gunboats and M.T.B.s which were heading for Eltigen. One M.T.B. was hit aft by 2 3.7 cm. shells. From 2315 our boats were continuously in action against enemy landing craft south of Eltigen, partly with close combat weapons (hand grenades, automatic weapons) because the guns could scarcely be used in such weather. In the course of these actions 2 landing pontoons each carrying 20 men and equipped with one gun of at least 4.5 cm. were sunk, together with a two-funneled vessel (presumably a tug). Own casualties: 2 dead, 1 seriously wounded and several slightly wounded. Each boat suffered several hits from 2 cm. guns and machine-guns.

After midnight the weather grew much worse and it became impossible for the boats to fire their guns. The boats took on a roll of 60°. Lifeboats, life belts and ammunition were torn loose and swept overboard and the men had to be lashed on deck. At 0145 the patrol had to be abandoned because the boats were in danger of capsizing.

Our E-boats encountered no enemy forces in the southern part of Kerch Strait or between Opuk and Takil. At 2400 they also were forced to give up because of the weather.

Land Situation:

Enemy thrusts from the Eltigen beachhead were repulsed by a counter-attack of ours. Northeast of Kerch the enemy has been attacking with strong forces since 0400. More patrol activity on the Perekep front.

During the evening there was no substantial change on the Chongar and Sivash fronts.

On the Perekop front minor enemy infiltrations made in the course of the day were mopped up, and tanks which advanced from the area north of Armiansk were driven back. Further thrusts from the Eltigen beachhead were beaten back in heavy fighting. In the Daksy beachhead the enemy attacked in strength and was repulsed with heavy losses. The northern flank up to Iyachovka has been regained.

Because of the NE gale the enemy was unable to send reinforcements to the beachheads.

Now that the enemy has set up heavy batteries and searchlights on Kossa Chushka and batteries near Yenikale we must expect that more enemy supplies will reach the Iyach beachhead under cover of these guns. I have therefore decided to give orders for all-out operations tonight and on future nights when the situation requires it. The operations will go on regardless of weather conditions, and in view of their difficult nature we must expect losses in personnel and boats. The object will be seriously to disturb enemy ferry shipping by making repeated raids into the channel between Yenikale-Cape Penar and Kossa Chushka.

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In view of the special importance of this operation in relieving the pressure on the Army, the following orders have been sent to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla:

- a. During the night of 5/6 November, 5 naval ferry barges in close formation under the command of Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will make a series of raids on enemy ferry shipping in the channel between Yenikale-Cape Fenar and Kossa Chushka.
- b. The force will be commanded by the Flotilla Commander in one boat, and two other officers will act as the commander of 2 groups of 2 boats.
- c. The force will sail from Kerch so that the first raid is made at 1800 off point Red 11.
- d. The force will re-enter Kerch at daybreak.
- e. Smoke screen laying is recommended.

The collaboration of both the Air Force and the Army has been requested for this operation. 1st Air Corps has been asked to bomb searchlights and enemy batteries on Kossa Chushka in the course of the day. 17th Army H.Q. has been requested to see that enemy batteries are engaged by our own shore batteries when they open fire on the naval ferry barges.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla have been informed accordingly.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla have also been ordered to sail 4 naval ferry barges to patrol off Kamish Durun between Point 7 and Point 9. Only in the worst weather will Naval Shore Commander cancel the patrols.

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to send 3 boats to occupy patrol positions between 45° 11' N and 45° 15' N during the night of 5/6 November, concentrating off Eltigen. Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was also informed of the naval ferry barge operations.

As motor minesweeper and naval ferry barge sailings from Theodosia to the patrol lines had to be canceled because of the weather, the patrol orders were changed. Five boats were to be on patrol at the northern end of the strait between Yenikale-Cape Fenar and Kossa Chushka, and 2 on patrol off Eltigen. There were no patrols off Kamish Durun. Because of the weather, the boats could not sail from Kerch until 2000.

Western Black Sea:

At 1500 4 Italian E-boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla entered Galatz for dockyard repairs. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Danube Delta and Naval Liaison Officer to Army Group 4 have been informed that the situation may necessitate a sudden stopping of naval supply traffic in the Kherson area and if necessary merchant ships, lighters, etc. in Kherson will be

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transferred by order. Naval ferry barge F 314 reported that at 1038 she had a gun duel with enemy forces entrenched ashore in the Dnieper estuary southwest of Kherson. The naval ferry barge was hit by artillery and machine-gunfire, otherwise no damage. The request from Army Group 4 for 4 naval ferry barges for the transportation of ammunition from Odessa to Sevastopol is granted. Another 4 naval ferry barges will be sent immediately to Nikolaiev.

South Coast Crimea:

Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported that minelaying in Koktobel Bay had to be postponed because of the weather. Attempts are being made to take soundings in minefield S 74.

Four naval ferry barges from Sevastopol put in to Theodosia for patrol duty in Kerch Strait.

Kerch Strait:

Twenty EMB mines were laid in Kerch Bay off the Kolonka mole according to plan.

At 0500 the returning U 9 reported that she would be at the rendezvous point off Constantza at 0700 on 6 November.

The transfer of U 24 to Galatz for a refit will be delayed because the escort vessels cannot sail on account of the weather. This delay is regrettable in view of the approaching ice period. U 19 reported that she would be ready for operations by 9 November or by 10 November at the latest after work outstanding had been completed.

Now that new EMS mines have arrived, it will be a standing order that each outward bound U-boat shall be equipped with one EMS mine.

Minesweeping Activity:

The FZ-boat sweep off Sevastopol had to be interrupted because of the weather.

FZ-boats made a check-sweep for round mines off Sevastopol. No minesweeping in the Danube.

Supply Traffic:

No convoy traffic because of the weather.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping was observed in the course of daylight and night reconnaissance over the eastern and central Black Sea and south of the Taur coast. The Turkish coast was not reconnoitered.

At 1042 3 coastal vessels each 300 tons, were sighted 5 miles southeast of Gielenjik, heading north.

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Aerial photographic reconnaissance showed the following shipping to be in enemy ports on the Black Sea:

Yeisk: 1 large motor gunboat, 10 boats taken to be landing craft, 1 small coastal vessel and about 60 boats, some on shore.

Primorsko: 1 small coastal vessel and approximately 90 boats, some on shore.

Achuevski: About 15 boats, some ashore.

Anapa: 3 motor gunboats, 2 tugs, 1 coastal vessel, 1 lighter, 2 pontoon ferries and about 20 boats.

Tuapse: 1 boat taken to be a minesweeper, 6 motor minesweepers, 3 M.T.B.s on shore, 7 freighters, each about 1,500 tons, 1 coastal vessel (800 tons), 4 coastal vessels totaling about 800 tons, 1 floating crane, 10 landing craft and about 30 boats.

Ghelenjik: 2 M.T.B.s, 1 coastal vessel of 800 tons, 4 coastal vessels totaling 800 tons, about 35 boats.

Senaya: No shipping traffic.

In Tuapse, the fact that freight tonnage is double what it was on 3 November is striking. There are now 7 freighters totaling 10,500 tons and 5 coastal vessels totaling 4,000 tons in this port - in all 14,500 tons. In Ghelenjik and Anapa the number of landing craft has decreased compared with previous days. Otherwise there is no substantial change in the harbors photographed.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported that during the day there was moderate M.T.B. and motor minesweeper activity off the northern part of the east coast up to Kerch Strait, increasing during the evening. In the central and southern part of the coast, slight activity of small vessels. During the evening 1 ship, probably a destroyer, put in to a base in the southeastern part of the coast. Bearings were obtained on 4 submarines in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters off the west coast of the Crimea. Another submarine was detected, position unknown, probably in the eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea - Eastern Black Sea: NE - N winds, force 3-4, overcast, cloudy later, visibility 6 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

The situation in the early morning was as follows:

During the night of 5/6 November, immediately after the winds and sea had abated to the weather limit (NE winds, force 3), 5 naval ferry lanes sailed into the northern part of Kerch Strait and patrolled three times along the Yenikale-Cape Fomar route at slow speed. The craft crossed the enemy ferry route in rough seas but

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encountered no ships. The boats were not shelled from the shore. During the operation enemy batteries and searchlights on Kossa Chushka were pinned down by 1st Air Corps bombing raids.

The patrol line off the Eltigen beachhead likewise met with no enemy shipping and was not in action.

South of Eltigen a Russian lighter carrying 5 guns drifted on to our own shore. It had probably been in the tow of the tug which was sunk by our motor minesweepers during the night of 4/5 November.

Land Situation:

Near Eltigen attempts at a breakthrough are continuing. Since the early hours strong enemy forces in the Laksy beachhead have been attacking Hill 144.1. The attacks were repulsed during the forenoon. No heavy attacks during the afternoon. At noon the Chushka-Shukovka ferry traffic was resumed. No reinforcements reached the Eltigen beachhead by sea, but supplies were sent by air to both beachheads.

Cape Chroni is in enemy hands. The radar station there was demolished by the crew, which is now fighting with the Army.

This morning a counter-attack was launched to mop up the enemy infiltration south of the Tartar Ditch. Only local successes were achieved. The target could not be reached because of tough enemy resistance and the attack had to be halted so that our forces could be held in reserve to counter the strong enemy attacks on the western part of the Tartar Ditch.

The following operations are planned for the night of 6/7 November:

1. 4 naval ferry barges will make a series of raids into the northern part of Kerch Strait, as far as Cape Fonar. At the same time our planes will pin down enemy batteries and searchlights on Kossa Chushka.
2. The following patrol lines will be occupied.
 - a. 5 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay, because the Army expects enemy landings there.
 - b. 3 naval ferry barges off the bay of Kamish Durun.
 - c. 3 motor minesweepers off the Eltigen beachhead.
 - d. 2 E-boats between Chon-relek and Cape Takil and 2 between Cape Takil and Opuk.

Relevant orders will be given to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus and to the commanders of individual flotillas. If early morning fog comes down, the boats will not leave their positions until it has cleared. Sailing times are settled.

1st Air Corps was informed of the plans and was requested to send a liaison officer to Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus to settle local details such as times, etc.

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All the boats sailed according to plan. Only 4 naval ferry barges could occupy the patrol line off Kerch Bay because one of the boats developed engine trouble.

Western Black Sea:

From 0550 - 0755 the southern bank of the Dnieper down river from Kherson was bombarded by 6 naval ferry barges. Firing with all guns, the boats shelled enemy positions and the village of Kusninka. Five boats, 1 cutter, and 1 loaded lighter which was beached were destroyed. Two loaded lighters which were abandoned were taken in tow. The Air Force bombed the enemy at the same time.

South Coast Crimea:

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was instructed to transfer motor minesweepers R 196 and R 207 immediately from Sevastopol to Theodosia to take part in the Kerch operations.

Naval gunnery lighter No. 4 sailed from Sevastopol for Theodosia to take part in the Kerch operations.

Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported that the minefield in Koktebel Bay and Baraken Bay had been laid according to plan.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to lay more LHM mines directly along the Kolonka mole, as it is expected that landings will be made there. In the first minelaying operation mines were laid so far south of the mole that boats approaching the mole close to the coast would be able to avoid the minefield.

At 1215 U 9 entered Constantza after an operational cruise.

Two minesweepers, 4 freighters totaling 8,000 tons and 1 tanker of 2,500 tons have been observed in Tuapse. U 23, which was waiting north of Tuapse, was ordered to proceed full speed ahead to the south of Tuapse. It was considered more important for her to achieve some success against the shipping now in port there than for her to arrive some hours earlier at the point where a large-scale landing was thought to be imminent. Up to now this has been the reason for her waiting between Tuapse and Chelenjik.

U 20 reported a delay of one day in sailing because the casing of her aerial filled with water during submerged trials.

Enemy Air Activity:

Two air raids on Sevastopol, 40 bombs and phosphorus dropped. No damage or losses were reported. Another air raid on Simferopol and Balaklava; no damage or losses.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats carried out a check sweep for ground mines with towed loop gear off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol, covering the area 6 times.

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Supply Traffic:

Because of the weather convoy traffic has not yet been resumed along the south coast of the Crimea and in the western Black Sea.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

At 1700 the Air Force issued a summary of reconnaissance on 7 November.

Reconnaissance was hindered by the weather. No traffic was observed in the enemy beachheads in Kerch Peninsula. In Saksy there were 15 motor-and animal-drawn vehicles, and on the roads in the Kalenchak-Perokop-Choplinka area a total of 160 motor-and animal-drawn vehicles were observed moving in various directions. At about 1000 a long column of all kinds of weapons about 20 km. in length was sighted heading south along the Perokop-Choplinka road. There are no details of this yet. Six enemy tanks and 100 men on horseback were observed north of Perokop. Twenty boats were engaged on ferry traffic across the Sivash near Chinary, and south of the Sivash there were strongly manned enemy positions. Only individual enemy movements were observed in the coastal area south and southwest of Kherson. Busy motor traffic - in all some 300 vehicles in various directions - was observed off the Kherson bridgehead up to the Sturyovska-Kelerei-Dol. Kapani line.

On the roads along the eastern bank of the Dnieper between Kherson and Berislav and along the southern bank near Krinki about 120 boats and pontoons were observed. On the Dnieper island north of Kritsinny there were 20 boats. Sixty boats were sighted north of Ljubinovka. Between Vladimirovka and Gornostayovka some 50 motor-and animal-drawn vehicles were seen.

Five miles northwest of Tuapse 1 large motor minesweeper, 1 small motor minesweeper and 2 coastal vessels (totaling 640 tons) were sighted, medium speed, course SE.

Enemy shipping in port:

Tuapse: 2 ships taken to be minesweepers, 5 M.T.s, 4 freighters totaling about 3,600 tons, 4 coastal vessels totaling 900 tons, 1 lighter, 19 half-pontoons ashore, 1 patrol vessel with boom defense, 1 floating crane and 26 boats including 14 ashore.

Sochi: 2 large motor minesweepers, 1 large motor minesweeper on a slipway, 1 small motor minesweeper on a slipway and 9 boats.

Sulhum: 1 coastal vessel, 4 small vessels (type not recognized), 13 boats, 1 floating dock (old), 1 tanker of about 7,000 tons (old), and 1 freighter of about 700 tons (old).

Batum (partly obscured by cloud): 1 light cruiser, 1 destroyer, 3 submarines, 1 passenger vessel of about 9,000 tons, 1 freighter of 1,000 tons, 1 floating crane, 7 coastal vessels totaling 2,500 tons, and 5 boats.

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Poti: 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 destroyers (1 in dock), 1 F-boat, 4 submarines, the hull of a warship (heavy cruiser), 7 freighters totaling about 32,500 tons, 1 tanker of 7,000 tons in dock and 1 M.T.B.

Yeisk: 1 boat taken to be a motor gunboat, and approximately 30 boats.

Protoka estuary: 1 small coastal vessel and approximately 20 boats.

Ghelenjik: 6 motor minesweepers, 4 M.T.B.s, 10 small coastal vessels and lighters totaling approximately 2,000 tons, and 32 boats.

Novorossisk: 2 M.T.B.s and 10 boats.

Anapa: 4 motor minesweepers, 1 lighter and about 10 tugs and landing craft.

Taman (partly obscured by cloud): 5 motor minesweepers, 5 M.T.B.s and about 10 boats.

Fishery Chushka: About 10 boats, presumably loading.

Ilich: 1 lighter and several boats loading.

Temriuk: 3 motor gunboats, 2 M.T.B.s, some 20 pontoon ferries and about 20 boats.

Later examination of the photographs revealed:

Ilich: (new) 3 motor gunboats, 1 pontoon ferry, 1 tug, 1 small coastal vessel and 10 small boats.

Gatuchi Kut: 1 motor gunboat, pontoon ferries, 1 tug for motor landing craft and 15 boats (possibly assembled for landing attempt). In Anapa the number of motor landing craft has increased and the number of pontoon ferries and small boats has decreased - they were presumably withdrawn to the north.

Part of the photograph of Ghelenjik was blurred. Increase in M.T.B.s and small coastal vessels (2,800 tons).

A radio intercept report states that at 1915 1 submarine was located 28 miles southwest of Cape Sarich. At 2055 this boat and another submarine received the position of an unknown vessel which was given as 44 miles west-southwest of Tuapse.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria obtained bearings on 4 M.T.B.s and 1 motor minesweeper off the northern part of the east coast up to Kerch Strait. Off the central to southern parts of the east coast 1 M.T.B. and 1 minesweeper were detected during the day and 3 more minesweepers at night.

Five submarines were detected in the operational area of the north-western Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea.

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Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

E winds, later SE winds, force 3 - 2, cloudy, light scattered showers, visibility 12 miles, morning fog-banks along the coast.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

The situation during the early hours of 7 November was as follows:

Although our patrols in the central and southern Kerch Strait during the night of 6/7 November once again had no contact with the enemy, ships of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla on patrol off Eltigen and the naval ferry barges which penetrated into the northern part of the Strait encountered enemy landing craft several times.

At 2030 our boats off Eltigen sighted a towed convoy consisting of 25 vessels heading for the beachhead. After gunfire all the enemy boats withdrew to the east, and the landing was prevented. The enemy boats then tried to reach the beachhead one by one. These attempts were frustrated, and 3 large landing craft carrying troops were sunk. Another enemy landing craft was damaged so seriously that the crew abandoned ship. One M.T.B. was shot up. It ran aground by the stern and burned out. In size and form the enemy landing craft correspond roughly to our large combined operations landing craft, about 80 tons.

In the course of their raids in the northern part of Kerch Strait our naval ferry barges set 1 motor gunboat on fire. No ferry traffic was encountered off the beachhead. Between 2230 - 0240 the boats were heavily shelled by shore artillery.

None of the 4 naval ferry barges suffered serious casualties, and the damage was slight. Naval ferry barge F 386, which ran aground south of Kamish Burun, was towed off undamaged in the evening.

Land Situation:

During the night there was only patrol activity in both beachheads. Insignificant shelling on the northern front. A major attack is expected after the enemy forces have assembled.

It has just been ascertained that the strength of the naval detachment employed as infantry in the shore battle in the Arabatzkaya is 2 officers and 410 men; in fact, almost the entire Haecker group (Naval Port Commander, Genichesk). As there is no senior officer present, Lieutenant (s.g.) Kluver, Commander Training Establishment at Eupatoria, has been appointed in command of these men. The acting Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine (Lieutenant Commander Stiege) who is withdrawing from Genichesk has been asked to make a report on the situation.

Because the construction of concrete defense works cannot be carried on in the present situation, 100 engineers will be released and placed at the disposal of 17th Army H.Q. insofar as they are not required for the construction of field emplacements.

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The number of men drafted to the Army has now risen to about 1,000.

Details:

1. Forces employed on Arabatzkaya	410 men
2. Infantry reserve assembled from all the shore units	430 men
3. Naval fortress engineers	100 men
4. Assembled from batteries in Kerch Strait which were disbanded (exact number not yet reported).	<u>100 men</u>
	<u>1,040 men</u>

By request of the Army, a searchlight platoon has been formed for service near Perekop. Four G 60 searchlights from the armament store of Sevastopol arsenal. A searchlight N.C.O. has been drafted from the Training Establishment, Bupatoria to take command of the platoon, together with 4 searchlight experts. The remaining personnel will be drawn by the Army from the infantry reserve formed of naval personnel.

Two searchlights are already being transported to the northern front, and 2 more will follow tomorrow.

It is planned to occupy the following patrol lines in defense of Kerch Strait during the night of 7/8 November:

- a. 2 E-boats between Opuk and Kys Aul.
- b. 2 E-boats Cape Takil-Chongelek.
- c. 5 motor minesweepers Chongekok up to 45° 15' N.
- d. 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun.
- e. 4 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay.

The reason for strengthening the patrol line off Eltigen is that reinforcements will probably be brought to the Eltigen beachhead and also that a new landing attempt south of Eltigen is possible tonight in view of the enemy's actions last night. Four naval ferry barges will repeat their raids into the northern part of Kerch Strait, if possible in cooperation with the Air Force.

Relevant orders concerning these operations and the times at which the individual patrol groups will leave and re-enter harbor have been issued to the commands concerned.

Besides preventing enemy landings, the motor minesweepers will be given the task of destroying by gunfire any landing craft which may be lying on the shore near Eltigen.

1st Air Corps has been requested to repeat last night's operation.

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As the result of a suggestion made by Group South stating that (1) enemy batteries on both sides of Kerch Strait could be effectively silenced if our planes laid a smoke screen to support the naval operations and (2) we could make a landing in the rear of the Eltigen beachhead, the following report was made to Group:

1. The request submitted to 1st Air Corps on 5 November for smoke-laying planes to support our naval ferry barges could not be granted, because suitable planes were not available.
2. On 4 November I suggested to 17th Army H.Q. (see War Diary 4 November) that we could put our own troops ashore in the Eaksy beachhead from naval ferry barges. The proposal could not be put into practice because there was no troop contingent available.

In Op. 937/43 dated 4 November 1943 Group South requested the opinion of Admiral, Black Sea concerning a possible mine barrier which would close Karkinitzki Bay, and the possibility of minelaying in the channels of the Dnieper estuary. For opinion see Appendix - Admiral, Black Sea 299 A I dated 7 November 1943.

Western Black Sea:

Naval ferry barge F 580, which was sailing from Odessa to Nikolaiev, encountered enemy gunfire from Kimburn Peninsula on entering the Bug east of the spit at Cape Achigiolkaya. No damage. The fire was not returned because the position of the battery could not be observed.

Naval Liaison Officer to 4th Air Force was requested to arrange for air reconnaissance and bombing of enemy batteries to be carried out as soon as possible to protect the sea routes.

On this subject Naval Liaison Officer to Army Group A was informed that the sea route for the withdrawal of shipping and the evacuation of Nikolaiev is now virtually closed as a result of the enemy occupation of Kimburn Peninsula. He was asked to submit a request to Army Group A for a landing to be made on Kimburn or for batteries to be set up on the northern bank of the Dnieper estuary to defend our shipping.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was informed that it now seems possible to sail transports and convoys during the night. If necessary patrol vessels could be stationed to lay a smoke screen in the direction of the enemy.

South Coast Crimea:

The attention of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has been drawn to the present supply situation in the Crimea, especially in respect of ammunition and fuel. He has been ordered to do everything possible to provide escorts and sail transports, and to cancel sailings only in the worst weather. In view of the present shortage of patrol forces, great demands will have to be made on German and Rumanian escort vessels to ensure that transports sail in time.

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In view of the present war situation it may become necessary to make reductions in the escort strength hitherto required. (Marginal note in handwriting reads: It can hardly be assumed that hitherto the escort forces were stronger than necessary; therefore "reductions" makes no sense! Tr. N.)

At 0400 2 motor minesweepers of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla sailed from Sevastopol for Theodosia to operate with the patrol force in Kerch Strait. Naval gunnery lighter No. 4, which was proceeding to Theodosia, had to put into Yalta because of engine failure.

Kerch Strait:

During 4 - 6 November a radar set intended for Sevastopol North was transported from Sevastopol to Cape Takil, where it has been installed. It will be ready to operate from 1600 on 7 November. It is planned to transfer the Cape Takil set which is out of order to Constantza, as it will not be possible to repair it on the Crimea.

The order to lay six IMA mines off the end of the Kolonka mole has been carried out.

At 0700 U 24 sailed for Sulina escorted by a motor minesweeper. She will later proceed to Galatz for a period in dock.

U 20 was ordered to sail on 8 November equipped with 5 T3 torpedoes and 1 IMA mine. She will proceed via the northern route. Further orders will be given by radio as the situation requires.

Important items from the Short Report of U 24, 2nd half of 7th Black Sea operation, 20 October - 4 November:

22 October: Shortly after arriving in operational area off Pitsunda was detected while attacking tanker convoy at night (tanker 1,500 tons, 2 minesweepers, 3 motor minesweepers). Depth charges, slight damage. Followed up attack but no further contact with convoy, which probably put in to Sukhum.

29 October: Penetrated Sukhum harbor, observed 1 freighter covered by wreck of a tanker. No chance to attack.

31 October: Made submerged attack on stopped submarine chaser the size of a motor minesweeper (100 tons) off Pitsunda. Loud explosion. 3/4 minutes afterwards self-detonating depth charges, 2-3 minutes later all quiet. No observation made by periscope; sinking of ship seems practically certain. After setting course for base, sighted an escorted tanker, course southeast, west of Gagri (7,000 ton tanker, 4 minesweepers).

1 November, 0200: Fan-of-three fired, range 2200, missed.

The aerial photograph of Tuapse taken on 6 November showing 7 freighters, each 1,500 tons, and 1 freighter of 1,000 tons is worth noting. An agent's report from 17th Army H.Q. states that the Russians intend to land 2 divisions of riflemen from Tuapse on the southern Crimea. As the defense of the Crimea is the principal task of all seagoing and shore-based forces in the Black Sea, the following order has been issued:

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1. U 23 will occupy air grid square 8530 as operational area. Object: To intercept, report, attack and shadow landing force sailing from Tuapse.
2. U 18 which is on a special operation off Batum will sail for the operational area southeast of Tuapse if there seems to be no definite chance of success in the special operation.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats of the 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla made a ground mine check sweep off Sevastopol.

No sweeping in the Danube area because of the weather.

Supply Traffic:

After the improvement in the weather, convoy sailings in the Black Sea were resumed on a small scale. No convoys along the south coast of the Crimea.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

In the course of night reconnaissance slight activity of small vessels was detected off the south Taman coast. During the day from 0600 to 1500, 5 planes carried out reconnaissance over the western, central and eastern Black Sea without sighting any enemy shipping. Only moderate neutral shipping off the Turkish coast. A concentration of boats at Kossa Tuzla was bombed but the results were not observed. No reconnaissance of ports because of the weather. Examination of the aerial photographs taken during the forenoon of 7 November later revealed a decrease of 18 freighters totaling about 20,000 G.R.T. in Poti and Tuapse and also a decrease in small coastal vessels and small naval vessels in Poti alone. There is no substantial change in the other Caucasus ports.

A radio intercept report refers to 1 destroyer off the northern part and 1 off the central part of the east coast, and a submarine west of Cape Tarkhan, about 10 miles off shore. Two H.T.B.s received the position of an unidentified vessel given as approximately 10 miles southwest of Gdlenjik.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported destroyer(s) during the day and moderate activity of small vessels during the evening in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters off the Kerch Peninsula. In all 7 H.T.B.s and 3 motor minesweepers were detected, with another destroyer off the central part of the east coast.

Five submarines were detected in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea, and another submarine south of Theodosia.

At 2217 the radar station at Cape Meganom reported several vessels 5 miles south of Cape Meganom. At 0155 radar station 5 (Cape Chauda) reported several enemy vessels southwest of Cape Chauda.

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The term "enemy" vessels was a mistake. I have ordered that in future the word "unidentified" is to be used in reports.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

SE winds, force 3-5; cloudy to overcast, scattered showers, visibility 6 - 8 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a. Our patrols for the night of 7/8 November left according to plan and occupied their patrol lines at the correct time. Neither the naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay and Kamish Durun nor the E-boats had any contact with enemy forces. They were shelled several times from our own coast and suffered some casualties.

Five boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla again sank 2 motor gunboats and 1 M.T.B. off the Eltigen beachhead and heavily damaged a further motor gunboat. After their arrival at the patrol line at about 2100 they successfully blockaded the beachhead.

The motor minesweepers were delayed in sailing from Theodosia as a result to taking on ammunition and were therefore unable to arrive at their positions at the time ordered. Naval ferry barges were detailed to stand by at the patrol line until the arrival of the motor minesweepers. These naval ferry barges were on position in time but left before the arrival of the motor minesweepers, because at 1700 they sighted 5 vessels off Eltigen which they took to be the relieving motor minesweepers. However, as was discovered later, these were enemy vessels.

The raids by 4 naval ferry barges into the northern part of Kerch Strait had to be abandoned because of heavy gunfire from medium artillery on Kossa Chushka and from light artillery on the beachhead, supported by searchlights. F 446 suffered a direct hit on the bridge.

- b. Statements from prisoners of war reveal the following information about enemy losses through mines:
 1. In the course of the landing at Eltigen during the night of 31 October/1 November 2 landing craft were lost. During the night of 4/5 November 1 boat loaded with the regimental artillery of the 318th Heavy Division struck a mine. Out of twelve 7.62 cm. guns only 3 were taken back to the port of departure.
 2. In the course of the landing at Yenikale-Cape Fonar several boats were lost. As the prisoners were not informed of all the losses, it is possible that further losses were incurred.

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c. Land Situation:

Enemy attack against the southern flank in the Eaksy beachhead. A counter-attack is being made against the enemy infiltration southwest of Djanko. Urshin is in enemy hands. Night attacks south of Perokop were repulsed by a counter-attack. Since 0500 the enemy has been attacking on a wide front south of the Sivash. Extremely bitter fighting is going on at the Tartar Wall. After a battle in which fortunes constantly changed the Tartar Ditch is in our hands from 700 meters west of the signal man's hut.

On Kossa Tuszla the enemy has entrenched with 2-3 batteries of light caliber. It is now known that 5th Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 on Cape Fonar fired with one single gun right to the end and then joined in the infantry fighting. There is as yet no news of the battery commander. No news from 6th battery (Shukovka). It is assumed that the crew is also fighting with the infantry.

d. Operations of 613 Naval Gunnery Detachment:

On 7 November, 2nd Battery Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 (17 cm. guns) bombarded enemy landing craft off Eltigen. Because of the withdrawal of our front line which is encircling the enemy near Eltigen, one searchlight of this battery had to be demolished on 5 November. 4th Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 (Kerch port, three 7.62 cm. semi-automatic guns) is restricted in its action by the fact that the old captured guns are now worn out. Three 7.62 cm. semi-automatic guns from the arsenal have been ordered as replacements.

Orders have been given for the following operations for the night of 8/9 November:

1. 3 naval ferry barges will lay 40 LMA mines in the eastern part of Kerch Strait between Yenikale-Shukovka and Kossa Chushka. The barges will sail from Kerch at 2400.
2. Patrol lines:
 - a. 4 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay.
 - b. 2 motor minesweepers off Kamish Burun.
 - c. 4 naval ferry barges between Kamish Burun and Chongelek, concentrating on Eltigen.
 - d. 3 naval ferry barges between Chongelek and Takil.

The commanders concerned have received relevant orders. 1st Air Corps has been requested to support the operation mentioned under 1. Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla requested permission to proceed to Theodosia with the 5 boats from the Eltigen patrol line now lying in Kamish Burun in order to inspect the armament, take on ammunition, and transfer 2 seriously wounded ratings. This request was granted with the reservation that 2 boats with guns ready for action must stay in Kamish Burun.

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In view of the air raids on Kamish, which are increasing in intensity every hour, the flotilla commander has decided to proceed to Theodosia with all 5 boats. In consequence of this tonight's patrol mentioned under 2b. will be carried out by 2 naval ferry barges instead. All the boats sailed according to plan.

At 2100 and 2156 the naval ferry barges off Eltigen had the first engagements with gunboats and M.T.B.s.

Western Black Sea:

As aerial photographs of Turpse and Poti on 7 November revealed that 16 freighters (20,000 tons) have disappeared from these ports since the last reconnaissance and as the whereabouts of these ships has not yet been discovered, it is assumed that the Russians are concentrating freighters for a large-scale landing. Such an operation would probably be against Theodosia, but Eupatoria Bay is not out of the question. I therefore consider it necessary to form a patrol line of boats between Eupatoria and Cape Lukull during tonight as a precaution.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla received the following orders:

- a. At 2200 4 naval ferry barges will sail from Sevastopol to form a patrol line between Eupatoria and Cape Lukull. The boats will stand on and off regularly along the patrol line at equal distances apart.
- b. Object of the patrol is to make a signal or transmit a "Most Immediate" report immediately if enemy forces are sighted or contacted. A landing is to be prevented at all coasts.
- c. Boats will leave the patrol line at 0500 and put in to Sevastopol.
- d. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast was ordered to inform convoys passing this stretch of the coast. The coast has been warned by Naval Shore Commander, Crimea.

South Coast Crimea:

Further defense measures:

- a. The following order was issued to all commands:

Enemy naval surface force attacks are to be expected along the entire coast of the Crimea. If enemy forces are sighted or engaged transmit a "Most Immediate" report immediately.

- b. Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla received orders to the effect that from 2400 - 0500 during the night of 8/9 November 3 boats will be under sailing notice.
- c. Commander, Naval Air was requested to send night reconnaissance planes to cover the area south of Theodosia.

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Kerch Strait:

The 3 naval ferry barges in need of repair which have been engaged on patrol duties sailed from Kerch to Theodosia in exchange for 3 fully operational boats.

In Op. 7332 dated 8 November Group South concurred with the opinion of Admiral, Black Sea concerning the mining of Karkinitzki Bay (see Appendix to War Diary 7 November).

U 24 is proceeding up the Danube, due in Galatz at 1500 for major refit.

At 1300 U 20 sailed from Constantza on operations, proceeding via the northern route.

Extract from Short Report of U 9 (7th Black Sea operation, 2nd part):

24 October: After taking in supplies in Theodosia sailed for operational area north of Tuapse, later south of Tuapse.

29 October: At night sighted tanker convoy (tanker 3,000 G.R.T., 7 motor minesweepers) entering Tuapse. First single torpedo missed because underestimated speed. Second single shot fired range 2,500 meters, loud explosion after about 4 minutes, no effect on target observed. Tanker reduced speed, all motor minesweepers formed protective semi-circle astern, convoy proceeded to Tuapse on different course. Because of the patrols and the nearness of the coast it was not possible to reach another attacking position.

3 November: Laid one ES mine according to orders off the southern entrance to Tuapse and set course for base.

4 November: In the morning in air grid square 6420 unsuccessfully played a cat and mouse game with one or even two enemy submarines.

6 November: Entered Constantza.

U 18 reported: At 1116 sank tanker of 2,000 tons entering harbor in Batum roads. Enemy must have thought it was a ground mine, as no depth charges were dropped. Hitherto no traffic, roads empty.

U 18 was ordered to proceed to south of Tuapse, seizing any chance to attack in other operational areas (see War Diary 7 November):

The U-boat base reported U 9 probably ready for operations again on 28 November. Date for U 24 (major refit) cannot yet be given.

Minesweeping Activity:

Two mines were swept by minesweeping planes in the Dnioper estuary. No other minesweeping activity.

Supply Traffic:

Routine convoy sailings for the Crimea and in the western Black Sea. Nothing to report.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping was detected in the course of night reconnaissance over the south coast of Kerch Peninsula and down as far the Caucasus coast (Sochi). From 0600 until nightfall, 4 planes made a reconnaissance of the whole of the Black Sea. No enemy or neutral shipping was observed in the course of this thorough reconnaissance. Because of the weather no reconnaissance of ports could be made.

At about 1330 1st Air Corps reported that an enemy reconnaissance plane, position 45 miles west of Cape Khersonese, had reported to its ground base that it had sighted a German convoy. At about 1500 several enemy torpedo planes were in the air, course west, 26 miles south of Cape Mağanom.

The report made by the reconnaissance plane probably refers to the towed convoy proceeding from Odessa to Sevastopol which passed Tarkhankutzki at 0730.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast was ordered to warn the convoy by radio. Fighter escort is being provided by 1st Air Corps by request.

A radio intercept report states that 1 submarine was detected 50 miles southwest of Tarkhankutzki and one 45 miles east of Sulina.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported only moderate shipping in the northeastern Black Sea as far as Kerch Peninsula; in all 5 M.T.B.s and motor minesweepers. In the evening some small vessels and 2 boats taken to be gunboats were detected off the southern part of the east coast.

Two of the submarines operating in the northwestern Black Sea up to the waters west and southwest of the Crimea were detected, and 2 more submarines were off the central and southern parts of the east coast.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Light winds, mainly S, cloudy, local showers, visibility 8 - 10 miles.

At 0730 four naval ferry barges from 1st Landing Craft Flotilla entered Sevastopol from the patrol lines in Eupatoria Bay. During the night of 8/9 November, the boats were twice attacked by submarines. Two torpedoes passed under the naval ferry barges. Depth charges dropped without result. Otherwise nothing to report.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a. The boats on patrol last night carried out their task of blockading the enemy beachheads.

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Nothing was sighted by our naval ferry barges on patrol in Kerch Bay, off Kamish Burun and between Takil and Chongelek. Our naval ferry barges off Eltigen had three engagements with enemy motor gunboats which were escorting landing craft. One motor gunboat was hit by a 7.5 cm. shell and seriously damaged. The enemy landing craft were forced to withdraw.

F 449, which was in the naval ferry barge force carrying out the order to lay mines in the northern part of Kerch Strait, ran aground in fog on the enemy shore near Yenikale while returning from the operation. Before dawn the crew was taken off by another naval ferry barge and the boat, which contained mines intended for a rapid mining of Kerch in the event of a hurried evacuation, was blown up. At daybreak our own naval ferry barges off Eltigen fired on each other during fog. F 419 was hit in her ammunition and seriously damaged. The boat was towed in to Kerch. Six dead, including the commander, and 2 wounded.

Prisoners of war state that during the night of 2/3 November 6-8 landing craft carrying 630 men were sunk by gunfire and mines while ferrying over to the Baksy beachhead.

b. Land Situation:

During the night of 8/9 November, all was quiet in the beachheads in Kerch Strait. In the Sivash beachhead Hill 17.4 west of Urshin was recaptured by us. An enemy surprise attack south of Perekop was repulsed.

During the day there were new enemy attacks south of the Sivash, and Hill 17.4 west of Urshin was lost again. Nothing to report from the beachheads in Kerch Strait. Busy ferry traffic between Kossa Chushka and Shukovka.

Patrols in Kerch Strait for the night of 9/10 November:

1. 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay.
2. 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun.
3. 2 groups of 3 naval ferry barges between Red 4 and 45° 16' N, concentrating on Eltigen.
4. 2 naval ferry barges between Takil and Chongelek.

Instructions as to duty of patrols, times etc. as in previous orders. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been informed accordingly. The patrols sailed and were at their positions as ordered.

Naval ferry barges off the Eltigen beachhead reported several engagements with enemy gunboats after 1930. The enemy was forced to withdraw to the east. Details not yet available.

Western Black Sea:

At 1700 the minelaying force will sail from Sevastopol to lay minefield S 47 west of Sevastopol.

9 November 1943

Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to sail with motor minesweepers (MA) from Theodosia to Sevastopol at dusk, and to sweep route Brown with oropesa gear if the weather permits.

Four boats sailed at 1540.

South Coast Crimea:

M-boats 326 and 372 sailed from Ivan Baba to Balaklava to stand by in readiness for an enemy surface force attack against the south coast of the Crimea.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was informed that the ban on convoys sailing on full moon nights is lifted until further notice in view of the urgent need for supplies in the Crimea.

In reply to an enquiry from Naval Liaison Officer, 4th Air Force asking whether it was known here if Russian ships sailed from ports for an offensive against the Crimea, 4th Air Force and 1st Air Corps were informed:

Here we only know that photographic reconnaissance of Tuapse and Poti on 7 November showed that about 16 freighters totaling 20,000 tons had disappeared since the last reconnaissance. Where these missing ships are is not yet known, as not all the ports have been reconnoitered.

The ships may be at sea carrying supplies between Caucasus ports or on offensive operations. The fact that nothing was sighted by thorough air reconnaissance of the eastern part of the Black Sea on 8 and 9 November counts against the latter possibility.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to lay minefield K 18 from naval ferry barges during the night of 9/10 November as follows:

from 45° 12.4' N, 36° 31.5' E
to 45° 11.6' N, 36° 31.5' E.

Deviations up to 0.5 miles to the east or west are permissible. Report exact position.

Mines - 30 MGC mines in Kerch.

Distance between mines: 50 meters. Depth setting: 1 meter.

The minelaying is to be carried out unobserved by the enemy. Take into account moon. Report when operation completed.

Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 reported 1 enemy plane shot down by 2nd Battery (Kommuna Initiative) and 1 brought down by 7th Battery (Korich Turun).

9 November 1943

I am proceeding to Theodosia for several hours to hold a conference on operations with Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla.

U 18 sank a tanker of 2,000 G.R.T. in Batum roads. (The U-boat thinks that the enemy suspects a non-contact mine, hence it would not be appropriate to publish the fact! See War Diary 8 November).

Interrogations of Russian fishermen captured by U 23 near Poti reveal that in the first half of October 2 medium freighters and 1 or 2 guardboats sank "from an unknown cause" about 3-5 miles north of Poti. About 30 men from the crews were able to rescue themselves. Details not known.

During this period nothing was sunk by our U-boats. On 20 September U 20 laid 9 TMB mines in the northern approach channel. It is assumed that these mines were effective. The reaction of the Russians to the torpedoing of the 2,000 ton tanker by U 18 in Batum roads indirectly confirms this.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats made 16 sweeps with towed loop gear off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol without result.

Supply Traffic:

Routine convoy sailings in the western Black Sea and close to the Crimean coast. Nothing to report.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Six planes carried out reconnaissance, concentrating at night on the area from the south coast of the Crimea to 50 miles out to sea and during the day flying over the central and eastern Black Sea from dawn to dusk. No enemy shipping was detected. There was lively activity of small vessels in the northern part of Kerch Strait. A Soviet convoy consisting of 15 small vessels escorted by fighters was sighted along the Taman coast off the southern entrance to Kerch Strait.

Because of bad weather no reconnaissance could be made of ports in the Black Sea and along the Caucasus coast.

Three M.T.B.s and 1 motor gunboat were detected by radio in the northeastern Black Sea up to the Kerch Peninsula. In the same sea area as far as Tuapse 1 destroyer was detected during the afternoon and 1 minesweeper and another M.T.B. during the evening. Slight activity of small vessels off the southern part of the east coast.

Five submarines were detected in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea. One submarine was intercepted, position unknown, probably proceeding west.

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Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

SE winds, force 3-5, overcast, showers, visibility about 6-10 miles, fog-banks and overhead fog.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, 1st E-Boat Flotilla and 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotillas have been informed of the following radiogram from C-in-C Navy, to be communicated to the crews concerned:

"The successes achieved by the naval forces operating off the Crimean coast have contributed much towards a favorable outcome of the defensive battle now going on. I express my acknowledgements to all the forces concerned, and especially to 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla. The fight must be carried on with tenacity and determination.

Grand Admiral Denitz".

- a. The success which our patrols in Kerch Strait have achieved up to now is confirmed by an intercepted Russian radiogram which states that the sea blockade of the Altiigen beachhead is practically complete.

During the night of 9/10 November, our naval ferry barges in the patrol line off Altiigen had repeated engagements with enemy motor gunboats and M.F.B.s from 1745 to 2100. On each occasion the enemy withdrew to the east without reaching the beachhead. A direct hit was scored on a motor gunboat with a 7.5 cm. shell, but the sinking of the boat was not observed. From 2100 to 0100 the naval ferry barges stood on and off in front of the beachhead in poor visibility. Fog came down at 0100 and the naval ferry barges anchored off Altiigen. After 2100 no further landing attempts were made. The naval ferry barges left the patrol line after daybreak when the fog had lifted. On their return voyage to Kerch they were heavily shelled from the eastern shore by 15 cm. guns (Cape Panajia and Kassa Tuszla). No casualties or damage.

Nothing to report from the patrols off Kerch Bay and Karish Durun.

- b. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 9th Batteries, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 assisted our naval forces in the blockade of the Altiigen beachhead. 1st Battery (15 cm. semi-automatic guns) scored hits on gunboats and on an ammunition and fuel store in a loading center south of Cape Tuszla. 9th Battery (12.2 cm.) observed hits on an enemy gunboat off Cape Panajia.

c. Land Situation:

At 2300 on 9 November after a sudden bombardment, the enemy launched an attack south of Perekop but was repulsed, suffering heavy losses. No other fighting on the Perekop front. It was observed that reinforcements were being brought up and entrenchment was going on. In the fighting on the Perekop front during 1-7 November our forces suffered heavy losses (all Germans):

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23 officers, 2,483 N.C.O.s and men.

At night all quiet in the Eltigen beachhead. During the day enemy concentrations were dispersed by gunfire. During the night enemy attacks were made in the northern part of the Etky beachhead, our own front being withdrawn to the western edge of Kurukov Kart.

In renewed attacks after dawn the enemy took advantage of the foggy weather and penetrated our main defense line up to the sector south of Hill 106.6. The infiltration was halted and the gap closed by throwing in our last reserves. Since noon enemy attacks from Etky have been in progress against our main defense line between Hills 129.6 and 115.4. Fighting is continuing.

In the last few days the partisan situation in the Crimea has been aggravated considerably. Acts of sabotage and attacks on motor vehicles are increasing. Even during the day the main roads are dangerous for anyone proceeding alone. The order has therefore been given for traffic to proceed in convoy. Severe measures against the civil population have been ordered.

The enemy is strengthening their hold in the Etky beachhead by sending continuous reinforcements from Kessa, Zhushka to Zhukovka and Goshnya, especially by day. Our own shore batteries are no longer in a position to disrupt the enemy supply traffic. Full-scale offensive raids by our naval ferry barges at night in the northern part of Kerch Strait, which is only 4,000 meters wide, are no longer feasible, as the enemy has erected heavy gun batteries and searchlights on both sides of the water. The casualties and losses incurred in such operations would in no way balance the results achieved. All that can be achieved is a temporary interruption of the ferry traffic during the night, while during the day the enemy is able to ferry over reinforcements undisturbed as long as the Air Force does not intervene.

Apart from our planes making bombing and machinegun raids, the only way to stop enemy supplies being ferried across is to lay mines.

Already 111 mines have been laid

a. east of Cape Fenar and

b. east of the line from $45^{\circ} 20' N, 36^{\circ} 38' E$ to
 $45^{\circ} 21.6' N, 36^{\circ} 40' E$

and it is planned to lay moored mines west of the line b. above during the night of 11/12 November. As the mines already laid will not be sufficient to disrupt ferry traffic over a long period, 1st Air Corps has been requested to lay further mines (M12 or M11 mines) in the stretch of water between the former cable railway and the Cape Fenar-Achilleon road under fire of the enemy.

Operations for the night of 10/11 November:

1. Patrols:

- 4 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay,
- 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Durun,

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5 motor minesweepers between Kishinev and Changanlek, concentrating on Elti en,
3 U-boats between Tikil and Changanlek.

2. Naval ferry barges will lay 30 FIC mines between Cape Huszla and Elti en in 36° 31.5' E (K 16).

Relevant orders have been sent to the commands concerned. Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will be in command of the motor minesweepers and U-boats.

Western Black Sea:

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to transfer submarine chasers U.S. 101 and 102 with the flotilla commander to Sevastopol for anti-submarine operations.

The order to lay minefield 3 47 west of Sevastopol was carried out by "Murgescu" and "Romanic".

At 1050 Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla entered Sevastopol with 4 motor minesweepers (M) from Theodosia. The area from Brown 13 to Brown 1 was swept with progress gear with no result.

1st Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 614 arrived at Sevastopol from Nikolaiev in 2 landing craft (four 15 cm. heavy field howitzers). By request of 17th Army U.S. the battery will operate in the Perekop Isthmus. Transportation by rail is planned for 11 November.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to lay minefield K 18 tonight. The mines could not be laid last night because the naval ferry barges (mines) were out of action.

U-Boat situation:

The sailing of U 19 is further delayed because of failure in the port Diesel engine.

At 1415 U 20 put in to Sevastopol for briefing by the Flotilla Commander. At 1800 after refueling the boat sailed for the operational area north of Tuapse via the northern route.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats made a ground mine check sweep off Sevastopol without result.

Supply Traffic:

Nothing to report on the convoy traffic which was resumed according to plan along the Crimean coast and in the western Black Sea.

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Sinforon Enemy Situation:

At 2345 on the night of 10/11 November about 30 miles west of Sechi night reconnaissance located a tanker of 7,000 tons, 3 ships presumably freighters totaling 3,000 tons and 3 patrol boats, with a close escort of flying boats and fighters, course northwest.

A daylight reconnaissance plane sighted a force consisting of 4 ships thought to be torpedo boats and 8 - 10 small vessels (L.T.B.s or motor minesweepers), course east, high speed, 5 miles east of the Bosphorus. The observation is not certain because the force was sailing close to the Turkish coast and the plane did not fly over the 10 mile zone. It may have been one of our own convoys leaving the Bosphorus. Further reconnaissance is being made.

No enemy shipping was detected in other parts of the Black Sea. Because of the weather no reconnaissance was made of the Caucasus coast and harbors.

A radio intercept report refers to 1 submarine about 40 miles and another about 65 miles SE of St. George.

Main Naval D/F Station, Mytilene reported moderate activity of small vessels during the forenoon in the northeastern Black Sea as far as Kerch Peninsula and increasing activity during the afternoon. In all, 3 minesweepers, 7 L.T.B.s and 2 motor gunboats were detected. Only slight activity of small vessel movements off the central and southern part of the east coast.

Three submarines were detected in the operational area of the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea and 3 more submarines were later inferred to be in the same area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Western Black Sea and west coast Crimea: - NE winds, force 5-6.
Malta - Kerch NE winds, force 5 - 6.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

2. During the night of 10/11 November the 5 motor minesweepers and 3 L-boats on patrol at the southern end of Kerch Strait successfully blockaded the Abidin beachhead. In seven engagements with enemy forces which at times were far superior in numbers our boats forced the enemy to withdraw each time. Hits with 7.5 cm. guns were scored by our motor minesweepers on several enemy motor gunboats and L.T.B.s. The sinking of the boats could not be observed because the enemy laid a smoke screen.

Off Eltiren L-boat # 51 torpedoed and sank a motor gunboat.

On return passage to Theodosia the motor minesweepers were bombed and machine-gunned by Russian round attack planes.

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Motor minesweeper R 204 was brought in to Theodosia seriously damaged. Some casualties.

The naval ferry barges in the patrol lines off Kerch Bay and Kamish Burun were not in action against enemy forces.

F. Land Situation:

The southern flank along the line from the eastern outskirts of Kolenka - Hill 104.3 - Achim Ushka - Mount Tomirovo - Hill 106.6 was recaptured. In the early hours the enemy broke through near Achim Ushka.

Heavy fighting continues in the Aksy beachhead. The enemy is attacking on a broad front with the entire infantry forces of 4th Division which, with 20 to 25 tanks, have now been ferried across. Our own main defense line which was newly formed during the night of 10/11 November was forced back to the line from the eastern outskirts of Kerch - eastern outskirts of Bulgank - Hills 133.3 and 71.3. The enemy is continuing the offensive against the new defense line, which is only occupied in strong points. Kolenka and the area there are in enemy hands.

All quiet in the Uti on beachhead. There the daily ration of food has been cut by half because of our naval blockade.

An enemy patrol which went ashore south of the Sivash and enemy troops which landed near Levy Chuvash were wiped out in a counter-attack.

The peninsula has been mapped up. Shelling on the Perekop front.

The reason why the enemy is not active on the Perekop front may be our own offensive at Mikopol.

As a result of the withdrawal of the front line and the enemy breakthrough near Achim Ushka, the situation has become critical for the port of Kerch: no more reserves are available, and the port is now under fire from enemy artillery.

Operations for the night of 11/12 November:

1. Five M-boats and 4 motor minesweepers will be on patrol at the southern end of Kerch Strait under the command of Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla. Four motor minesweepers and 3 M-boats will be on patrol between Chonolek and 45° 16' N and 2 M-boats between Takil and Changolek.
2. Kerch Bay and Kamish Burun will be covered by 7 naval ferry barges.

The commands concerned have received relevant orders concerning 1. and 2. together with times of the operations.

1st Air Corps was requested for fighter protection for the motor minesweepers from 1430 until nightfall and on 12 November from day-break until the boats put in to Theodosia.

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3. Naval ferry barges will lay minefield K 19 off Kerch Bay with 46 TIC mines.

Western Black Sea:

Commander, 31st Escort Flotilla was informed that the 6 ships which will be ready for operations about 14 November will come under the command of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea for operations until further notice. The ships will be employed on patrol duties and aerial mine-laying observation in the Dnieper Estuary.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Danube Delta reported that naval gunnery lighter No. 4 arrived at Ochakov and will be employed as a floating battery.

Kerch Strait:

Battery Chouba (11th Battery, Bay 1 Cannon Detachment 601):

In view of the present situation, this battery has been equipped with six 7.62 cm. Russian field guns until the shore batteries under construction are completed.

The battery is ready for action in the field.

Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla reported that the order to lay minefield K 18 between Cape Ruszla and Ultien was carried out successfully during the night of 10/11 November. Various enemy vessels were sighted in the course of the operation.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to send naval ferry barge (mines) P 446 to lay the following minefield during the night of 11/12 November:

From 45° 20.1' N, 36° 33.2' E
to 45° 19.1' N, 36° 33.0' E.

Mines: 46 TIC mines.

Distance between mines: 40 meters, same rows.

In the event of this mine-laying operation being canceled because of the enemy advance, P 446 will lay the TIC mines in Kerch Bay, being the last boat to sail from Kerch when the order to evacuate is given. The required minimum water depth for TIC mines, that is a depth setting of 4 meters, is to be observed.

In the course of the afternoon enemy forces advanced up to the eastern outskirts of Kerch and are now in possession of Kolonka. Enemy guns are covering the harbor of Kerch, which can no longer be used as a base by our naval ferry barges. The naval ferry barges will now have to rely on the small port of Kishik Surun, where berthing facilities are restricted. I am therefore compelled to withdraw some of them from Kerch Strait. Our patrols will consequently be weakened and in future it will be even more difficult to maintain the blockade of the Ultien beaches. I have advised Commanding General, 17th U.S. of this fact through Naval Liaison Officer and repeatedly request that the beachhead should be kept up while it is still weakened by our blockade.

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Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to transfer all boats now in Kerch to Theodosia, with the exception of the 6 naval ferry barges engaged on patrol duties off Kerch Bay and British Lurun, and the naval ferry barge (mines) F 446. The boats will pass Cape Takil at about 1700. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been informed of the motor minesweeper and E-boat operations at the southern end of Kerch Strait for the night of 11/12 November.

The tanker convoy reported yesterday was presumably not intercepted by U 18, and must have put in to Anapa. U 18 and U 20 have been ordered to station on and off from Anapa on 12 November on east-west courses in air grid squares 8428/29 and 9414/15 and to intercept the tanker, which is expected to sail again in the afternoon of 12 November. The boats will be informed that despite the full moon the convoy was escorted at night by flying boats and fighters.

Minesweeping Activities:

No E-boat operations because of the weather.

Minesweeping planes continued to operate in the Bosphorus. Run sweeps were made without result.

Supply Traffic:

Risk convoy activities in the western Black Sea proceeded according to plan and without incident. No convoys along the Crimean coast.

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Imperial Army Situation:

Flight reconnaissance was carried out over the south coast of the Crimea and down the Caucasus coast as far as Cape Pitsunda. During the day 3 reconnaissance planes flew over the western and central Black Sea and along the Caucasus coast as far as Cape Pitsunda. No enemy shipping to report.

Further reconnaissance of the force which was sighted off the Bosphorus yesterday resulted in the following observation: 3 large ships (grid square 1259) - 2 ships each 2,500 tons, 1 ship of 1,000 tons and 11 small vessels each of 150-200 tons. It is assumed that this is the force which was reported on 11 November. Moderate shipping was observed along the eastern part of the Turkish coast, but no shipping west of the 41.

At 0630 a long-range reconnaissance plane sighted a submarine 30 miles southwest of Therson and attacked it with bombs. The result was not observed.

A radio intercept report stated that at 1500 3 S.S.B.s and a minesweeper received a position report on a vessel sailing 13 miles southwest of Anapa, course northwest.

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Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported moderate I.L.D. activity off the northeast coast as far as Kerch Peninsula. Five I.L.D.s were detected. Between the central and the southern parts of the east coast there were suspected convoys or patrol forces returning to the southeast, including 5 minesweepers and 1 I.L.D. Two gunboats were detected in the Batum area.

In the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea 4 submarines were detected. Bearings were obtained on three of them.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

W winds, force 3 - 4, cloudy, local showers, visibility about 15 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a. During the night of 11/12 November, boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 1st E-Boat Flotilla on patrol at the southern end of Kerch Strait encountered no enemy convoys. The enemy seems to have stopped sending supplies to the Eltigen beachhead at night as a result of the severe losses suffered in past nights. The motor minesweepers and E-boats attacked boats lying ashore and off the beachhead; they torpedoed and sank 2 small vessels and 1 lighter of about 200 tons which was loaded with ammunition, shelled and set on fire 1 lighter loaded with fuel, and damaged 2 small motor gunboats lying on the beach. Equipment and ammunition dumps at the unloading points were shelled. The enemy replied with light gunfire from the shore but caused no damage or casualties in our boats.

The bombardment of the beach and village of Eltigen by four 3.7 cm., three 4 cm., fourteen 2 cm., five 8.6 cm. rocket-firing guns as well as numerous light machine-guns and rifles must have had a very demoralizing effect on the enemy, quite apart from the material success, especially as it was a surprise attack at very close range - 1,000 meters.

The naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay and Kamish Burun were not in action against the enemy.

- b. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Batteries, Gunnery Detachment 613 bombarded boats lying on the beach at Eltigen. 1 hit was scored on one boat in which ammunition exploded. 9th Battery shelled enemy gunboats off Cape Panaghis and scored a hit on one boat.

From 1430 to 1530 4 naval ferry barges shelled Kolonka.

- c. Land Situation:

In the Sakyr beachhead an attack by 4 enemy divisions was halted after heavy fighting by throwing in our last reserves. The front line now runs from the eastern outskirts of Kerch - eastern outskirts of Sulgonak - Hill 75.3. Since 0600 enemy tanks have been attacking Hill 133.3. Two battalions are being brought up from

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the Perekop front. Numerous reconnaissance thrusts which were made from the beachhead in the course of the day - partly even with tank support - were repulsed.

The expected large-scale attack did not materialize. The front line has not changed.

Nothing to report from the other fronts.

Operations for the night of 12/13 November:

1. No operations for 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, as the crews are exhausted after 6 night operations and must have a night's rest.
2. Five boats of 1st E-boat Flotilla will occupy the patrol line between Chonjok and 45° 16' N, concentrating on Mitigen. If the enemy situation permits, 2 boats will make brief reconnaissance sorties to Cape Zhiril. Torpedoes will be fired only at worthwhile targets.
3. Seven naval ferry barges will patrol in the northern part of Kerch Strait, that is 4 off Kerch Bay and 3 off Kamish Burun. 1st Air Corps has been requested to provide fighter escort for the E-boats while they are leaving and entering port.

The E-boats sailing from Ivan Bala were delayed 30 minutes by an air raid, so that boats will be unable to arrive at the patrol line at the time ordered. The naval ferry barges patrolling off Kamish Burun were ordered by radio to occupy the E-boat patrol line until the E-boats arrive. The order was not received in time.

Western Black Sea:

Nine miles northeast of Burnas the steamer "Theoderich" was torpedoed by an enemy submarine and is sinking. The majority of the crew has been rescued. The survivors are being taken to Glessey by 2 naval ferry barges.

Energetic countermeasures must be taken to deal with the increasing Russian submarine activity. Because Commander, Convoys and Escorts is always short of escort vessels, he tends to employ the submarine chasers on escort duties rather than keep them for their original purpose.

He has therefore been ordered to maintain a permanent anti-submarine patrol of armed fishing vessels in the Bulina-Glessey area, independent of escort duties. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has also been ordered to equip submarine chaser No. 101 with dogrussing gear immediately after her return from the Bosphorus, and then to sail submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 to Sevastopol at the latest on 15 November under the command of Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla.

I intend to employ these 2 naval transports on anti-submarine duties in the Markhankutzki Sevastopol area.

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By order of Army Group A a Romanian infantry Battalion and a 7.5 cm. battery were transferred from Odiockov to the western tip of Kinkurn Peninsula by 2 naval ferry barges. Combined operations landing craft have been detailed for supply duty.

1st Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 614:

The following information concerning the unintentional transfer of 1st Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 614 to Kherson via Armiansk was given by the battery commander when he returned to the Crimea with his battery:

On 31 October because of overcrowding in the railway station, the battery was pushed from Armiansk 2 stations north to Novo Alexandrovka. In a surprise Russian tank attack against the railway line to Perekop, a section of the line towards the south was blown up. The train, which was standing north of where the line was cut, could only go one way and that was to Kherson, along the line dangerously near the enemy.

Prompt action by the battery commander succeeded in rescuing 20 new valuable guns and rocket throwers in the station at Novo Alexandrovka. The guns, which had been abandoned by the army and had already been prepared for demolition, were transported to the Officer Commanding in Kherson.

By agreement with the Army commands concerned, Lieutenant Commander (Naval Gunnery) Raven, Commander, Naval Gunnery Detachment 601 was appointed Group Commander, Naval Gunnery, Sevastopol. As per temporary orders from Army High Command, Coastal Artillery, Group Commander, Naval Gunnery, Sevastopol will be employed as Sector Artillery Commander in the Kacha valley - Sevastopol - Kherson - Balaklava area. Army coastal artillery, naval shore batteries and Air Force heavy anti-aircraft batteries stationed in this sector will come under his command in tactical matters insofar as they can be employed against targets afloat.

South Coast Crimea:

At 0300 the 6 naval ferry barges of the Kerch Strait patrols which were transferred from Kerch to Theodosia entered Theodosia under the command of Commander, 3rd Landing C

Kerch Strait:

During the night of 11/12 November, 46 MHC mines were laid in Kerch Bay by naval ferry barge P 446, as ordered.

The Marine Emergency Units including Naval Fitting-out Depot Kerch, etc. are taking part in the battle on land. The units have suffered casualties.

During the coming night U 19 is expected to arrive in the Caucasus operational area; thus there are again 3 boats in the operational area.

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Situation: The Russians are increasing their convoy traffic to Tuapse. Escorts have been strengthened and some convoys are sailing 30 miles out to sea. There is still the possibility of a landing operation with large ships on the south coast of the Crimea. The 3 U-boats are therefore being concentrated in quarterline formation southwest of Tuapse to intercept shipping and to be at hand in the event of a landing.

A radio intercept report stated that a Russian submarine chaser received the position of an unknown vessel, which corresponds exactly with that of U 20. The U-boat is being informed of this. All boats are being informed of probable convoy movements to the southeast.

Items of importance from the short report of U 23, 3rd operational cruise in Black Sea, 2nd part:

1 November: Arrived in the operational area north of Tuapse, no shipping observed. Detected small spar buoy with red topmark in air grid square 85791.

6 November: Proceeded to operational area south of Tuapse; nothing to report except an A.L.B. proceeding across the danger area.

9 November: M3 mines laid in air grid square 8559 and reported for clearing to be taken. Returned via northern route without incident.

Minesweeping Activity:

Three minesweeping planes made 3 sweeps in the Danube area over a channel 600 meters wide without result.

MZ-boats made 4 ground min. check sweeps off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol without result. Minesweeping was interrupted by bad weather.

Supply Traffic:

In the convoy proceeding from Constantza to Odessa the steamer "Theoderich" was torpedoed by a submarine. The convoy consisting of 5 submarine chasers and 2 tankers which was proceeding from Sulina to Sevastopol had to turn back because of engine failure in a tanker. Nothing to report from the other convoys in the western Black Sea and along the coast of the Crimea.

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Siniferopol enemy situation:

No shipping was sighted in the course of night reconnaissance in the northeastern Black Sea and along the Caucasus coast as far as Cape Mitsunda. Five planes carried out daylight reconnaissance over the central Black Sea as far as the Caucasus coast near Piti. No enemy or neutral shipping. At about 1300 the Air Reporting Center, Siniferopol reported 15 light naval vessels close to the Taurin coast (Kerch Strait) about 13 miles east of Chonjolek.

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4th Air Force reported no shipping detected in the Black Sea apart from 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons at sea east of Sinope, course east.

The picture showed that small vessel activity is still continuing, particularly along the northern part of the east coast in the Kerch Peninsula area, where 5 L.T.B.s and 1 minesweeper were detected; between the central and the southern parts of the east coast there were 3 L.T.B.s and 1 minesweeper.

Three submarines were detected in the waters west to southwest of the Crimea, another which was probably coming from the east, and 1 in the operational area. Two submarines were at sea, position unknown.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Variable winds, mainly S, force 2 - 3, cloudy at times, local showers, visibility 6 - 10 miles. During the afternoon along the west coast of the Crimea SE wind freshening to force 5 - 6, backing S during the night.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

Initial entry in War Diary 12 November: In the course of the day the enemy dropped about 100 canisters of supplies over Eltiven. At 1515 enemy planes laid a smoke screen off Eltiven. Five vessels were then seen to approach the beachhead. Despite heavy fire 4 of them went alongside on the beach for a short time, presumably to land troops.

- a. The 5 L-boats on patrol off Eltiven from 1745 until daybreak on 12/13 November detected no enemy shipping. It was a clear moonlight night. The naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay and Kamish Burun likewise sighted nothing of the enemy.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reports that the port of Kamish Burun is being subjected to continual air raids interspersed with shelling, hence our naval ferry barges lying there during the day are in great danger.

- b. A delayed report from Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus states that on 30 and 31 October 2 Army Coastal Artillery Detachments were withdrawn from the Kerch Strait sector. One of the detachments, in the southern part of Kerch Strait, was put under the tactical command of Commander, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 for bombardment of targets at sea. In consequence of the withdrawal of these detachments and of the main part of the anti-aircraft batteries, Kerch Strait will now be dependent mainly on the batteries of Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 for its gunnery defense.

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c. Land Situation:

Insignificant fighting in the Baksy beachhead and on the Sivash front. The front line has not changed. Enemy attacks which were made during the day in the Baksy beachhead north of Kolonka and against hills 133.3 and 125.6 were repulsed. All quiet at Ultigen.

Nothing to report from the northern front.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus received the following operational orders for the night of 13/14 November:

1. 4 naval ferry barges off Kerch.
2. From 1500 three naval ferry barges will patrol off Ultigen to intercept enemy supplies to the beachhead in the twilight. At about 1630 four motor minesweepers will arrive to take over the patrol off Ultigen. On being relieved the naval ferry barges will make for the patrol line off Kamish Durun. On the signal "H-A-H" the naval ferry barges off Kamish Durun will go to the assistance of the motor minesweepers off Ultigen. All naval ferry barges will enter Kamish Durun at dawn.
3. Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to sail 4 boats to the patrol line at the southern end of Kerch Strait, concentrating on Ultigen. Fighter escort has been requested for the boats sailing to the patrol line and returning to port.

The naval ferry barges occupied their patrol positions at 1500 and the motor minesweepers at 1630. Owing to bad weather (SE winds, 7) the boats had to abandon the patrol at 1830. It would have been impossible for the boats to fire their guns, and an enemy landing at Ultigen in heavy breakers with the wind blowing against the shore was out of the question.

Western Black Sea:

Attempts to salvage the steamer "Theoderich", which was torpedoed yesterday 10 miles northeast of Burnas, were abandoned because the ship broke in two and attempts to take her in tow would be useless.

Naval gunnery lighter No. 4, which has been transferred to Ochakov, is being used as a floating battery at Fervomeisk to act as a flank-ing protection for the Rumanian battalion which was ferried over to Kimburn Peninsula, and to prevent enemy attempts to cross the Dnieper estuary.

In view of the difficult fuel situation in the Crimea, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to sail the tanker "Shell 1" loaded with aviation gasoline from Julina to Sevastopol immediately. "Bayreuth" is also to be loaded with Diesel oil in Odessa and escorted to Sevastopol as early as possible.

Enemy Air Activity:

A total of 14 planes carried out two air raids on Ivan baba. Forty medium and heavy bombs and 50 fragmentation bombs were dropped and

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machine-guns were used. Ten bombs fell on the air-boat base, causing casualties and slight to medium damage to buildings. The plane was shot down.

Between 1100 and 1230 a towed convoy which was proceeding from Sevastopol to Odessa was attacked several times by enemy bombers and torpedo planes off the western tip of Tendra Peninsula. No damage was reported.

Minesweeping Activity:

PE-boats made 3 check sweeps for ground mines off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol without result.

Supply Traffic:

With the exception of the air raid on the Sevastopol - Odessa towed convoy, routine convoy traffic in the western Black Sea and along the Crimean coast proceeded according to plan and without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Night reconnaissance was carried out over the southern Crimea and the Caucasus coast down to Cape Mitsunda. No shipping was detected. During the day 6 planes made reconnaissance flights over the western, central and eastern Black Sea and along the Turkish coast without sighting enemy shipping.

Main Naval D/F Station, Apatoria reported 2 M.I.B.s and 2 other vessels thought to be submarine chasers in the northeastern Black Sea including the Kerch Peninsula area, and 3 M.I.B.s and 3 minesweepers between the central and southern parts of the east coast. One gunboat was intercepted in the sea of Azov.

Five submarines (bearings taken on 4) were intercepted in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea. Another submarine was later inferred to be in the operational area. In the afternoon 2 submarines were detected south of the central Crimea, probably proceeding to Thyse to obtain supplies for the boats at sea in the operational area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Western Black Sea and west coast Crimea: NE - E winds, force 5; abating to force 4 - 3 in the course of the day, cloudy to fair, visibility 15 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a. Because of the severe gale blowing in Kerch Strait last night (SE winds, force 9-10, sea 7, high swell) the motor minesweeper and naval ferry barge patrols had to be abandoned. On the strength of a favorable weather forecast (S winds, force 2-3) all the boats had sailed and had occupied their positions, but they were forced to leave them at 1830 after a gale had blown

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up. (See War Diary 13 November). At 0100 the ships of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla entered Theodosia after being damaged by heavy seas. The ships will not be able to sail on operations tonight. Otherwise nothing to report.

b. Land Situation Crimea:

Only scattered artillery and patrol activity in the beachheads in Kerch Strait. From Ashkadan the enemy attacked southwards. Enemy forces which had infiltrated south of Ashkadan were repulsed. Our own counter-attack southwest of Ashkadan achieved nothing, so a new counter-attack is in preparation for the evening of 14 November. Enemy attacks near Armiensk were repulsed.

In the Toksy beachhead fighting increased. Several attacks covered by tanks between Hills 139.3 and 125.6. A small enemy infiltration was sealed off and our last reserves are being called upon to carry out the mopping up. Seven tanks were put out of action.

Dusy traffic ahead of the northern front and on Taman Peninsula confirms the report from an agent indicating that a large-scale attack from the north and the east and a landing near Theodosia are imminent. The enemy has concentrated strong forces on Taman Peninsula and in the north.

Nothing to report from the Ultigen beachhead. The beachhead is still being supplied from the air.

In the present situation we must expect that the enemy may occupy Kerch any day, but it is still possible that the coastal section south of Pavlovski may remain in our hands. Hence our naval ferry barges would no longer be required to cover Kerch Bay, but the patrol line at the southern end of Kerch Strait would be maintained.

When this actually happens Kerch Bay must be closed from the south by mining Pavlovski Channel. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been given the following orders so that adequate preparations may be made in advance:

Naval ferry barges (mines) will be loaded with 12 RM mines in Theodosia. She will remain there under one hour's sailing notice until the sailing order is given. In the event of Kerch being evacuated, the 12 mines will be laid in Pavlovski Strait. Attention should be paid to the minimum water depth of 5 meters. Set period delay mechanism 1, clockwork setting switch IIIa (two hours).

The mining orders will be elaborated there and the operation carried out at the appointed time. Operations for the night of 14/15 November:

1. Weather conditions make it appear doubtful whether 1st E-Deat Flotilla will be able to operate off Ultigen, as was intended. At first 4 naval ferry barges will occupy the patrol line off Ultigen from 1500 and 3 naval ferry barges the patrol line off Kerch Bay.

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2. If the weather improves 5 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will sail and report their arrival off Altigen with the plain language signal "E-I-F" and time of origin reported 3 times over Coastal V/IF (East).
3. After arrival of the E-boats 2 naval ferry barges will sail to positions off Kamish Burun and 2 will reinforce the group off Kerch Bay.

As the weather improved during the afternoon the E-boats sailed from Ivan Mabe at 1800. Only 4 boats from the 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be on patrol. One boat cannot put to sea because of engine trouble.

The boats occupied the patrol lines at 2020. The 4 naval ferry barges which were to maintain patrol line off Altigen from 1500 until the arrival of the E-boats sailed as ordered but returned to Kamish Burun because of weather conditions. The naval ferry barges were ordered to sail immediately to the patrol line off Kamish Burun and 2 to the patrol line in Kerch Bay as in orders above. The craft were on station from 2230. All the boats received orders to leave the patrol lines at daybreak.

Fighter escort has been requested for the E-boats returning to port.

Western Black Sea:

The attention of Commander, Convoys and Escorts has again been drawn to the serious submarine threat in the northwestern Black Sea, which must be countered by systematic anti-submarine measures. He has been ordered to employ one submarine chaser force on permanent anti-submarine patrol duties in the area St. George-Buzaz and not to employ this force on escort duties. A second submarine chaser force consisting of Nos. 101 and 102 under the command of Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla will operate in the Cape Barkhan area after their arrival in Sevastopol. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that submarine chasers Nos. 2303, 2307 and 2308 sailed from Constantza at 2100 for anti-submarine patrol in the area St. George-Buzaz.

At 1015 Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that the minelaying squadron had sailed from Constantza to lay minefield S 50 west of Sevastopol.

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reports: At 0720 naval ferry barges in the Dnieper estuary were fired on by enemy batteries from the town of Kadovsk. They returned the fire. No damage.

A report which came in from a Rumanian vessel stated that several unidentified vessels had been sighted east of Cape Iya. Although little credence was given to the report, the 2 E-boats lying in Balaklava were ordered to sail at 1900 to patrol between Balaklava and Cape Jarich. At 2155 the boats returned to port, having made a careful reconnaissance of the coast and sighted nothing.

South Coast Crimea:

A new double row anti-torpedo net has been laid outside the harbor at Theodosia.

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U-boats at sea in the operational area were informed of suspected convoy movements inferred from radio intercept service.

Otherwise no reports or hints of enemy supply shipping.

Minesweeping Activity:

No minesweeping because of the weather.

Supply Traffic:

Nothing to report from convoys in the western Black Sea.

15 November 1943

Simferopol Enemy Situation:

1st Air Corps reported: Night reconnaissance was carried out over the south coast of Kerch Peninsula and the Caucasus coast down to Cape Pitsunda and daylight reconnaissance over the central and eastern Black Sea. Neither enemy nor neutral shipping was encountered.

Anti-submarine patrol in the northern Black Sea at night. An enemy submarine was located 15 miles south-southwest of Tarkhankutzki.

The Air Force carried out reconnaissance of the ports of Ghelenjik, Tomriuk, Ilich, Anapa and Novorossisk with the following result:

Enemy shipping in port:

Ghelenjik: 1 minesweeper, 4 ships taken to be motor minesweepers, 3 boats taken to be M.T.B.s, 4 motor landing craft, 5 coastal vessels and barges totaling 900 tons, and about 40 boats.

Novorossisk (only partly visible): 1 tug, 1 lighter of about 100 tons and about 5 boats.

Anapa: 1 motor minesweeper, 2 M.T.B.s, 2 small coastal vessels and 6 boats.

Gluchoi channel: 7 large motor gunboats, 2 boats taken to be M.T.B.s, 5 pontoon ferries and 20 boats some of which were on the shore.

Fishery Ilich (very hazy): 1 wreck (old) and about 5 boats were recognized.

Senaya Bay (mostly covered by cloud): Photographs of no value.

A radio intercept report stated that 1 minesweeper was off the northern east coast of the Black Sea. Here a reconnaissance plane reported a convoy steering 150°, speed 8 knots, giving a Russian grid square position.

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A destroyer coming from the southeast received the position of an unidentified vessel which was given as about 35 miles west of Sechi. The same position was transmitted to an M.T.B. and a gunboat. The minesweeper received the position of the unidentified vessel about 10 miles south-southwest of Pitsunda and another unidentified vessel 10 miles southwest of Gudaby.

Another radio intercept report stated that gunboats received the position of a vessel 18 miles south of Tuapse.

In the northeastern Black Sea including the Kerch Strait area lively activity of small vessels during the day, decreasing at night. A total of 7 M.T.B.s and 1 minesweeper was detected. Minor activity between the central and southern part of the east coast, including 1 motor gunboat and 1 M.T.B. during the day and 1 destroyer, 1 minesweeper, 1 gunboat and 1 M.T.B. during the evening.

A total of 6 submarines was detected by radio in the northwestern Black Sea including the waters west and southwest of the Crimea. Another submarine, position unknown, was intercepted, possibly in the same area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

S - S.W. winds, force 3, temperature 4 during the day, mainly fair, visibility 15 miles after early morning mist, freshening winds from west up to force 4 - 5, clouding over later.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a. During the night of 14/15 November, the boats of 1st L-Boat Flotilla encountered no enemy convoys off Mitigen. Around 0240 the boats bombarded the beachhead in order to make the enemy aware of their presence. Several hits were scored on landing craft lying ashore. On their way back the boats were attacked by 4 enemy bombers, but no damage was caused. One plane was shot down.

The naval ferry barges off Kerch and Kamish Burun sighted nothing.

Since 0630 the naval ferry barges lying in the harbor of Kamish Burun have been subjected to continual air raids by ground attack planes. Bombs and phosphorus were dropped, and machine-guns were used. No damage has been reported.

If these air raids continue, it may become necessary to give up Kamish Burun as a base for naval ferry barges employed on patrol duties. After the boats have returned to port the crews are unable to find any rest or relaxation because they are permanently at battle stations and the guns have to be manned continually. A temporary solution of the problem is being attempted by bringing in reserve personnel (crews of boats which are not yet ready for sea).

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b. Land Situation:

Nothing to report in the Baksy beachhead except an unsuccessful enemy battalion attack southeast of Bulganak. Lively mortar fire and shelling along our main defense line in the southern part of the beachhead. It is observed that the southern flank is receiving continuous reinforcements.

On the northern front an enemy attack southwest of Ashkaden was repulsed. Repeated attacks on the Perokop front during the night were repulsed. Most of the sap which had been lost was recaptured. Fighting is still going on.

In the Sivash beachhead and near Perokop the enemy is observed to be concentrating for an offensive.

Near the Water Ditch the enemy infiltration east of the strongpoint has been nipped up.

Operations ordered for the night of 15/16 November:

The following patrol lines will be occupied at dusk:

1. 4 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla off Eltigen.
2. 3 naval ferry barges of 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla off Kamish Burun and 4 off Kerch Bay.

The flotilla commanders have been given relevant orders. 1st Air Corps has been requested to provide fighter escort for the motor minesweepers en route to the patrol lines and on their way back.

All the boats occupied the patrol lines from dusk.

At 1945 the motor minesweepers bombarded the Eltigen beachhead. Hits on 2 boats on the shore were observed. From 2245 the motor minesweepers had several engagements with enemy motor gunboats and M.T.B.s. Details not yet available.

Western Black Sea:

At 2200 submarine chasers Nos 101 and 102 sailed from Constantza for Sevastopol. The ships will be engaged on anti-submarine operations in the waters off Eupatoria, where the submarine menace is serious.

While proceeding from Odessa to Eupatoria naval ferry barge F 394 damaged her rudder and is shipping water. F 581 is standing by her and tug "Indus" and "Ship 19" sailed from Odessa to offer assistance.

Naval ferry barge F 592 was torpedoed by a submarine 4 miles west of Cape Tarkhan while proceeding in a convoy from Sevastopol to Odessa. Four of the crew and 15 German nationals who were aboard are missing.

West of Sevastopol minefield S 50 was laid by the "Bomania-Iurgescu" minelaying force.

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Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to take naval ferry barges # 312, # 335, # 476, # 447 and # 578, which are at present out of action, in convoy with "Dresden" and "Saale" from Theodosia to Sevastopol on the evening of 15 November.

Radiogram 1846 from U 19: "1530 followed up 8 plumes of smoke in air grid square 8456 true course 210° full speed ahead. 1705 out of sight, course 240°. Fall wing towards Sinop."

One hour after this radiogram was transmitted Radio Intercept Service intercepted a Russian radiogram which reported the position of an unidentified vessel to destroyer K and to a gun boat and M.T.B. The position appears to be a bearing on U 19. The plumes of smoke reported by U 19 may have come from patrol vessels (minesweepers) which were going out to meet a convoy coming from the southeast.

All U-boats in the operational area have been informed of the radio intercept report and the suspected convoys.

Aerary Air Activity:

- a. In the course of the day 5 air raids were made on Ivan Sabo, involving about 23 IL2 and 7 PE2 planes. Some 820 bombs including rocket fragmentation bombs were dropped and machine-guns were used. Minor casualties only, damage hardly worth mentioning. The pillbox of the Naval Gunnery Detachment 601 suffered a direct hit. One plane was shot down and probably three others.
- b. Other air raids were made on convoys proceeding in the western Black Sea.

At 1230 the "Danubius" convoy with naval transport No. 25 proceeding from Odessa to Sevastopol was attacked by 20 low-flying planes. No damage. 1 plane shot down.

About 35 miles west of Cape Tarkankutzki 20 planes attacked a convoy consisting of MT 1 and 3 submarine chasers proceeding from Sulina to Sevastopol. This raid also caused no damage.

Minesweeping Activity:

PE-boats made a ground mine check sweep off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol. The boats made 20 sweeps with towed loop gear without result.

Supply Traffic:

Convoy routine in the western Black Sea was considerably disturbed by the above-mentioned air raids and by the weather, which caused engine trouble in some ships. Some convoys had to put in to the nearest port.

Shipping space required for supplies and evacuation in the Crimea:

- Appendix I -

Transportation of assault guns:

- Appendix II -

(Signed) Kieseritzky

APPENDIX I

Shipping space required for supplies
and evacuation in the Crimea

Chief Quartermaster, Army Group A requested that from 5 November 1,500 tons of shipping and 200 cubic meters of fuel per day be made available for taking supplies to the Crimea and for evacuation purposes, to be drawn from the seagoing ships, tugs, lighters and tankers available. An additional 300 tons per day for Danube - Dnieper convoys and an additional 1,000 tons for Odessa - Nikolaiev traffic were also requested. This demand can also be met, because traffic between Odessa and Nikolaiev can be carried on for the most part by river tugs and lighters. It will not be possible at first to provide the full amount of shipping space requested for the following reasons:

1. A large amount of shipping space is required for evacuation purposes in Kherson and Nikolaiev.
2. Because of the shortage of tugs, lighters still lying in Sevastopol with cargo which has been brought back from the Kuban bridgehead cannot be turned round quickly enough.
3. Sufficient quantities of supplies cannot yet be concentrated in the loading ports.

Admiral, Black Sea has ordered that 1,500 tons of shipping must be ready for loading each day in the Crimea ports. notwithstanding shipping being loaded in the west coast ports.

In order to speed up supplies to and troop transportations from the Crimea, Army Group A ordered a department to be set up with Chief Quartermaster, having an officer of sea transportation at its head. The office was to meet the transport requirements of the three Services, of the economic administration and of Organization Todt etc., to decide on priority and to allocate tonnage accordingly. Admiral, Black Sea foresaw that the uniform organization of sea transportation would be upset by the establishment of this department. As a result of discussions with Chief Quartermaster, Army Group A on 13 November it was agreed that the sea transportation officer who had been appointed by Admiral, Black Sea would act as Liaison Officer only, while the operational responsibility for sea transportation would rest with the Navy, as in the Fuhrer's orders. Furthermore, Chief Quartermaster, Army Group A reported that the responsibility for dealing with Crimea supply requirements will be shifted to Chief Quartermaster, 17 Army H.Q. This measure is very much welcomed by Admiral, Black Sea, as both commands are situated in the same place and cooperation in sea transportation will thus be much easier.

For Admiral, Black Sea

Chief of Staff

(Signed) v. Conrady.

APPENDIX II

Transportation of Assault Guns

On 3 November Army Group A requested that 10 naval ferry barges be allocated for the transportation of 30 assault guns which were to be transshipped in Odessa on 8 November. On 5 November Army Group A was informed by urgent radiogram that Admiral, Black Sea would allocate seaworthy ships for this purpose so that the operation could be carried out as far as possible independently of the weather. On 4 November the Naval Liaison Officer to Army Group A was asked when the assault guns would arrive in Odessa. The answer arrived here on 6 November: "Exact date of arrival cannot yet be given. Port of loading will probably be Odessa." Commander, Convoys and Escorts was ordered to sail naval transport No. 25 to Odessa immediately despite the fact that she had only one screw, and to allocate 8 naval ferry barges from the Odessa-Kherson traffic for loading, as inspection has revealed that there are no seaworthy ships apart from the steamer "Santa Fe" which are equipped for handling heavy cargoes. (Marginal comment in pencil: "Commander, Sea Transportation must have known this." Tr. N.) The "Santa Fe" was then still in the Aegean. On 8 November the order was canceled as Naval Liaison Officer, Army Group A reported that the guns were still in Germany. On 11 November Chief Quartermaster, Army Group A reported that 15 assault guns would probably be ready for loading in Odessa on 15 November. Naval transport No. 25 was thereupon ordered to proceed to Odessa and 8 naval ferry barges were made available. A further order was given to sail the "Santa Fe" to Odessa immediately after she had replenished her bunkers at Constantza. On 12 November 11 assault guns were loaded on to 4 naval ferry barges in Nikolaiev without the knowledge of Admiral, Black Sea, as an assault gun detachment had arrived there in the meantime. On the other hand naval transport No. 25 which was sailed to Nikolaiev immediately by Commander, Sea Transportation, Black Sea on the strength of this information, was loaded with lorries, motor vehicles and ammunition. (Marginal comment in pencil: "Who did the loading then?" Tr. N.) Because of this unnecessary and unauthorized loading, the assault guns which are urgently needed on the Crimea were not transshipped on to the seaworthy transport No. 25, as was ordered by Admiral, Black Sea, but on to naval ferry barges, which are largely dependent on the weather for sailing. This mismanagement of affairs shows how justified Admiral, Black Sea's demand is that the control of sea transportation must remain with the Navy. (Marginal comment in pencil reads: "But the Navy had control. It would be interesting to discover who then did the loading of the ships. Presumably it was the Sea Transportation Office. If an Army command had given the orders it would certainly have been mentioned here." Signed C.R. 26/12. Tr. N.)

By order of Admiral, Black Sea the assault guns still at Odessa are being loaded on to the "Santa Fe".

For Admiral, Black Sea

(Signed) v. Conrady

Chief of Staff

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Naval Liaison Officer to
Army High Command (Army General Staff)

1 January, 1944.

Ref. No. 6/44

To: Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division.

Subject: War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea.

Reference: Admiral, Black Sea 7612 dated 20 November 1943.

Enclosed the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea for the period 1 - 15 November, 1943.

The War Diary deals with the Russian landing in Kerch Strait and the subsequent battles for the bridgeheads. In my opinion it contains a number of lessons which would be of value for defense against landing operations.

In view of the imminent invasion in the west it would seem appropriate to make these lessons known to ships and naval establishments. In this respect the following questions remain to be cleared up:

1. On 1 November the Russians landed near Albigen between 2 naval batteries which were situated only 5 km. away from the landing point. What lessons are to be learned in defense here?
2. Boats on patrol outside Kerch Bay did not intervene in the landing. This is a question of organization and of communication between coastal defense and patrols at sea.
3. During the night of 3 November the enemy landed near Shukovka (north of Yenikale) and destroyed the 2 naval batteries situated there. What lessons are to be learned from this in respect of coastal defense by shore batteries?
4. Presumably the forces which landed near Shukovka sailed from Temriuk. The mining of the northern end of Kerch Strait was therefore ineffective.
5. The enemy must have brought up the tonnage necessary for the landing operations - or at any rate some of it - from Genichesk through Kerch Strait to Iaman and Temriuk. Hence the mining of the southern end of Kerch Strait was likewise ineffective, and the mining of the corridor of water south of the island Kossá Tuzla was also useless.
6. On 2 November, Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla was appointed senior executive officer of the Kerch Strait patrols and was stationed in Kerch. Was this successful, or would it have been better to direct naval ferry barge operations from on board the craft?
7. What experience was gained as regards navigation and recognition signal procedure by the boats on patrol?
8. Did the landing craft in Kerch Strait operate as one force or did the boats act on their own initiative? What experiences were gained in battle?

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9. What experience was gained in the operation of individual patrol forces in Kerch Strait in certain areas in respect of avoiding confusion between friend and enemy?
10. What experience was gained in respect of cooperation between the Navy and Air Force?
11. What lessons are to be learned in the cooperation between naval forces and shore batteries, e.g. in pinning down Russian batteries on the eastern shore of Kerch Strait?

In my opinion it would be best to find the answers to these questions as quickly as possible. It would seem appropriate to send an experienced officer of Operations Branch, Naval Staff to the Crimea so that he could discuss these points personally with the operational staffs, the flotilla commanders and individual captains of the boats concerned, and investigate where mistakes occurred. The Army Staffs involved could also take part in the discussions.

(Marginal comment in pencil reads: "This would be the responsibility of Group South to which the various questions must be submitted by courier." Tr. K.)

(Signed) Hoygold.

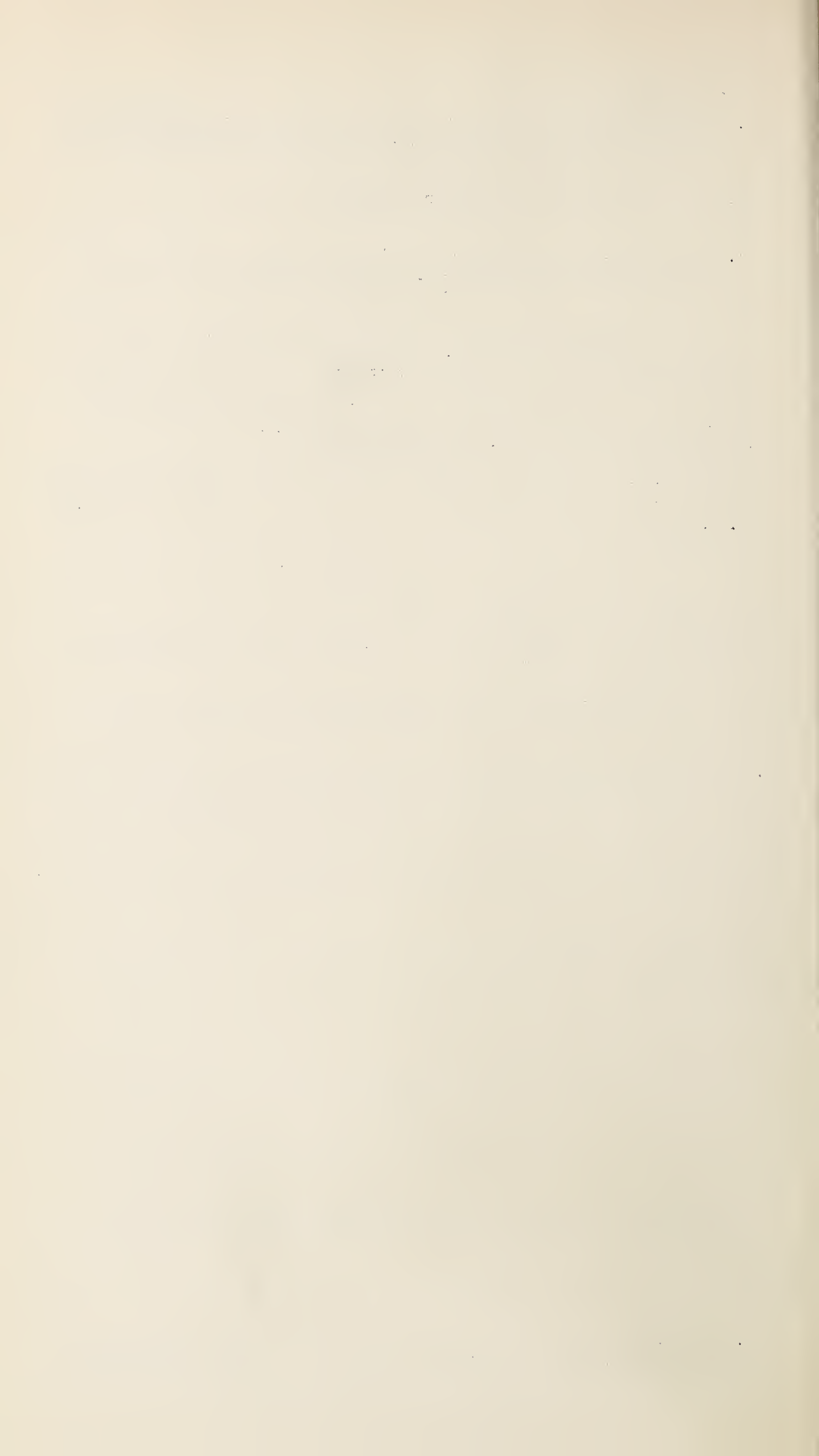
To: Operations Division, Naval Staff.

Forwarded with request for further orders; the questions put are only of an operational nature.

Naval Operations Staff, Group South

By Order

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WAR DIARY

OF

ADMIRAL, BLACK SEA

16-30 November 1943

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

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16 November 1943

Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping was sighted in the course of night reconnaissance along the Caucasus coast as far as Cape Pitsunda. Daylight reconnaissance by 3 planes over the central, western and south-eastern Black Sea detected the Bollositoul (?): At 1330 1 tanker of 2,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 5 patrol vessels course northeast, medium speed 20 miles southwest of Pitsunda and a concentration of 30 small boats off Zhelezni Rog.

Long-range reconnaissance planes reported a tanker of 2,000 tons, 2 vessels believed to be minesweepers and 5 armed small vessels course 300°, slow speed, 30 miles southwest of Sochi and 2 coastal vessels and 3 M.T.B.s (course 160°), 5 miles west of Tuapse. Aerial photographs show no substantial change in the number of boats in the ports on Taman Peninsula compared with previous days but a marked decrease compared with the number 3 weeks ago.

Radio intercept service reported detecting a submarine south of Eupatoria, probably the one which 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla reported at 0642 as submerged between Eupatoria and Tarkhankutzi.

An enemy destroyer and a minesweeper received 2 position reports on 2 unidentified vessels, one 23 miles south and the other south-southwest of Tuapse. Another position report was transmitted to the destroyer and the minesweeper from an unidentified vessel west-southwest of Tuapse.

D/F Station reported:

From off the northern to southern parts of the east coast of the Black Sea moderate activity of small vessels during the day and slight activity of vessels at night, including 7 M.T.B.s, 2 minesweepers, 1 motor gunboat and 1 submarine chaser; off the central part of the east coast during the evening 1 destroyer and 1 minesweeper probably from Tuapse and heading southeast, and 2 gunboats coming from the southeast.

Submarines detected:

5 in the northwestern Black Sea and west to southwest of the Crimea and 2 in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

SE - S winds, force 3 - 4, mainly fair, visibility 12 miles after early mist and fog.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) At 2245 on the night of 15/16 November, 4 motor minesweepers in patrol line off Eltigen had a running engagement with 20 motor gunboats and M.T.B.s which were trying to break through to Eltigen. At the same time the motor minesweepers were attacked by bombers and fired on by shore batteries from Kossa Tuzla and Panaghia. Eight attempts to break through were

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frustrated. Motor minesweeper R 207 was hit by a 4.5 cm. shell below the waterline and has to be underslung. At about 0100, our ships had to abandon position and return to Theodosia, where they arrived at 0620.

From 0230 naval ferry barges from the patrol line off Kamish Burun took over the patrol off the Eltigen beachhead until dawn. There were no further engagements with the enemy. Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 reported that the enemy had not succeeded in getting reinforcements through to the beachhead.

As 2 ships of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla were recently put out of action, only 3 ships could be sent to the patrol line off Eltigen. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla has been ordered to send 4 naval ferry barges to Kerch Strait this forenoon. The boats will take up position off Eltigen tonight. Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was also ordered to transfer 5 fully equipped naval ferry barges immediately from Sevastopol to Theodosia for operations in Kerch Strait in exchange for ferry barges in Kamish Burun which are out of action.

Irrespective of flotilla, naval ferry barges with the strongest armament should be selected from the craft available in Sevastopol. They will take on full supplies of ammunition and if possible reserve ammunition also.

b) Land Situation:

Several enemy assault detachments were repulsed at the Eltigen beachhead. 17th Army H.Q. confirmed that only a few enemy boats, if any, reached the Eltigen beachhead during the night of 15/16 November. Only moderate artillery activity at the Baksy beachhead.

Owing to fog, there was only slight fighting on the northern front. No incidents.

- c) 3rd Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 attempted to eliminate the searchlight on Kossa Tuzla which picks up our patrols out at sea. The first round fired was successful, as the searchlight went out and did not operate again.
- d) Group South has been informed that enemy submarine activity against our supplies to the Crimea has been intensified. Our permanent anti-submarine patrol along the coast from St. George to Bugaz and across to Tarkhankutzki can only be maintained if further supplies of depth charges are delivered immediately. The present stock of 200 will not even be sufficient to equip the newly commissioned submarine chasers.

The following operation is planned for the night of 16/17 November:

- 1.) Four boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy the patrol line between Cape Takil and Chongelek.
- 2.) Four naval ferry barges proceeding from Theodosia and due to pass Takil at 1630 will patrol off Eltigen. The boats will be joined by another naval ferry barge from Kamish Burun.

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3.) The patrol line off Kerch Bay will be occupied by 4 naval ferry barges and the patrol line off Kamish Burun by 2.

4.) E-boats will join the naval ferry barges if

a) the naval ferry barges request support with the plain language signal "H-E-R" or if

b) it is observed that the barges are in action against enemy forces.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus, 1st E-Boat Flotilla and 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla have been informed accordingly.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has been asked to acquaint the 4 naval ferry barges proceeding from Sevastopol with the situation in general and with their patrol duties in particular, and to instruct them that everything is to be done to prevent enemy supplies getting through.

Attempts are being made to secure fighter escort for the E-boats and naval ferry barges sailing from Theodosia from the time of leaving harbor until dusk.

Only 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be able to occupy the patrol line between Takil and Chongelek. One boat had to return because of engine trouble.

The 4 naval ferry barges which left Theodosia at 1145 for the patrol line off Eltigen were attacked three times by enemy planes off Cape Chauda. F 574 suffered a direct hit; gun out of action, boat damaged, 2 men killed, several injured. She was forced to return to port. Three naval ferry barges are sailing on. The patrol line off Eltigen will now be occupied by only 4 naval ferry barges.

Western Black Sea:

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to send the following 12 naval ferry barges now in Odessa to Eupatoria as soon as weather conditions permit: F 394, 581, 448, 583, 132, 467, 561, 563, 565, 579, 593 and 584. They are loaded with assault guns, trucks and ammunition.

The assault guns are urgently needed by 17th Army H.Q. for the defense of the Crimea. Because of the urgent need for these supplies, naval ferry barges will be diverted to Ak Mechet if weather conditions are unfavorable in Eupatoria. Two naval ferry barges carrying 5 assault guns have already arrived at Ak Mechet and have been unloaded. Naval Harbor Master, Ak Mechet reported that naval ferry barges F 394 and F 581, which left Ochakov for Sevastopol loaded with assault guns, were damaged by heavy seas and had to turn back 25 miles south of Tendra. The boats were towed to Odessa by tug INDUS and "Ship 19". On entering port, each naval ferry barge had about 50 tons of water in the hold.

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Motor minesweeper R 208 was ordered to sail at once with the "Bille" convoy to Sevastopol where she will be available to strengthen the Crimea group under Admiral, Black Sea. Two motor minesweepers (RA) from 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla are to be assigned to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea at once to make up in some measure for the transfer of R 208.

As 3 mines were observed to have been dropped during an air raid on Sevastopol, Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to send 2 motor minesweepers (RA) on 17 November to check the minelaying position with oropesa gear. Ground mines could not have been laid in this position because of the depth of the water (60 meters).

After the heavy anti-aircraft guns were withdrawn from Ivan Baba a few days ago we pointed out how urgent it was to have adequate anti-aircraft defenses to protect the E-boat base there. To remedy this situation, 9th Anti-Aircraft Division today mounted 2 heavy anti-aircraft batteries consisting of ten 8.8 cm. guns in this area.

At 1230 the Air Force reported a convoy (1 tanker of 2,000 tons, 1 destroyer and 3 or 4 guard boats), course northwest, in grid square 9323.

The report has been relayed to our U-boats with orders that the first boat to shadow the convoy is to transmit D/F signals for the other boats.

At 1950 U 19 reported sighting the convoy and transmitted D/F signals.

At 2020 she reported that the convoy consisted of 1 destroyer and 3 guard boats, course 290°, speed 13 knots.

At 2005 night air reconnaissance located the convoy, course northwest, in grid square 9454. The tanker was present but not the destroyer. It would seem that there are 2 separate convoys involved. U 19 received orders to cease transmitting D/F signals but to resume transmission when contact was made with the main convoy (tanker).

The night reconnaissance plane was ordered to continue shadowing until 2130 (limit of fuel) and then to drop flares above the convoy to guide the U-boats to the target before returning. The boats were informed of this order. However, the plane had to return early owing to engine trouble and a second plane could not take off because of the weather. In radiogram 2138 U 19 reported firing an unsuccessful fan-of-three torpedoes at a range of 4,500 meters. The radiogram from U 19 also stated that the boat had intercepted the main convoy and was continuing to shadow it and transmit D/F signals after being attacked with depth charges.

Our radio intercept service reported that the enemy had intercepted the 3 radiograms from U 19 and reported them to the leading destroyer and a minesweeper as indicating the position of an unidentified vessel.

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Enemy Air Activity:

At 1330 4 PE 2 planes dropped 14 bombs on Ivan Baba. No casualties.

Another air raid on Sevastopol. Three bombs were dropped on the town. No casualties or damage reported.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats checked the waters off Sevastopol for ground mines. Ten check sweeps were made with towed loop gear. No mines swept.

Minesweeping planes could not operate in the Danube Delta owing to fog.

Delivery of fuel for Army, Air Force and railroads:

Between 24 September and 14 November 1943, the following stocks of fuel were transferred from naval stores to the Army, Air Force and railroads to enable urgent operations to be carried out in the Crimea:

Aviation fuel	403 cbm.
Otto gasoline	74 cbm.
Diesel oil	13 cbm.
Bunker coal	about 3,400 tons.

In addition, 69 cbm. of Otto gasoline were transferred from Ships' stores to naval motorized units.

Supply Traffic:

With the improvement in the weather, Crimea convoys and convoys in the western Black Sea again ran as scheduled. Nothing to report except an unsuccessful enemy submarine attack on the "MT I" convoy (3 armed fishing vessels) 10 miles east of Cape Tarkhankutzki (1 torpedo, a misfire).

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Night reconnaissance planes reported that the tanker convoy sighted on the previous day 20 miles southwest of Pitsunda was heading for Tuapse. Daylight reconnaissance over the western and southeastern Black Sea failed to sight any enemy surface forces. One submarine was detected off Eupatoria.

According to a radio intercept report, 1 destroyer was detected at sea, probably in the southeastern Black Sea, and 1 submarine approximately 68 miles southwest of Tarkhankutzki.

A minesweeper received the position of an unidentified vessel located about 23 miles southwest of Cape Idokopas. No reconnaissance of Black Sea ports or harbors along the Caucasus coast owing to bad weather.

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Main Naval D/F Station reported no shipping movements in the north-eastern Black Sea. During the early morning, 1 destroyer was detected between the central and southern parts of the east coast and during the day 2 minesweepers, 3 M.T.B.s and 1 motor gunboat; in the evening 2 more minesweepers and probably the destroyer reported in the southeastern Black Sea.

Submarines detected: 1 in the northwestern Black Sea and west to southwest of the Crimea. It is thought that 4 more submarines are also present. There is probably 1 submarine still operating in the eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Light winds, mainly SE - E, sea breeze during the day, mainly fair, visibility 10 miles after early mist or fog.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a) From 2300 to 0030 during the night of 16/17 November, the naval ferry barges in the patrol lines off Kerch Bay, Kamish Burun and Eltigen had brief engagements with enemy craft, presumably gunboats which were feeling their way through our defenses. Enemy boats which attempted to break through off Eltigen were driven back by our naval ferry barges. At about 0300 the enemy tried to bypass the patrol line off Eltigen to the south but our boats forced the enemy to withdraw in an easterly direction. In this action F 535 was hit just above the waterline (a hole the size of a man's head). Apart from lifebelts catching fire, no damage was done. Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla on patrol in the southern part of Kerch Strait did not sight any convoy supplies heading for Eltigen. At 0030 1 M.T.B. and at 0100 1 gunboat were forced by our E-boats to withdraw to the east.

Otherwise nothing to report.

b) Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 reported that 1st Battery is shelling the enemy at Eltigen and Cape Tuzla and that 3rd Battery is bombarding the loading centers at Kossa Chushka. 2nd Battery was shelled from the Eltigen beachhead by 7.62 cm. guns and heavy mortars.

At about 1900 a small boat went ashore from 2 vessels which approached the coast south of the Eltigen beachhead. The searchlight crew of 2nd Battery fought 15 men with machine-guns and hand grenades and inflicted casualties. The remnants of the enemy then tried to get away to the north, but were intercepted by Rumanian soldiers and annihilated with the assistance of some of the searchlight crew who had followed in pursuit. After being picked up by our searchlight and shelled, the other boat withdrew to the east.

If the Army is considering mopping up the Eltigen beachhead, it must be remembered that the enemy has recently extended their gun positions on the beachhead. An operation to put our own troops ashore from naval ferry barges in the rear of the enemy would now encounter considerable difficulties.

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c) Land Situation:

The enemy infiltration south of Hill 133.3 at the Baksy beachhead was mopped up yesterday and our front consolidated. Enemy attacks on the new line were repulsed. Strong enemy attacks east of Bulganak during the night. Fighting still continues. Lively harassing fire from guns and mortars on the southern front of the Baksy beachhead today. The enemy was observed to be receiving continuous reinforcements at Kolonka and Hill 107.4.

On the northern front, only slight shelling by both sides owing to fog. Only slight enemy air activity in general. Nothing to report from the Eltigen beachhead.

Operations planned for the night of 17/18 November:

- 1.) Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla will send 3 naval ferry barges to the patrol line off Kerch Bay, 2 to the patrol line off Kamish Burun and 3 to the patrol line off Eltigen.
- 2.) Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla will send 3 E-boats and 2 motor minesweepers to the patrol line between Takil and Eltigen. The boats will concentrate on the north and will take up positions on their own initiative. The E-boats, motor minesweepers and naval ferry barges off Eltigen will go to each other's assistance if enemy forces are contacted.

The E-boats and motor minesweepers will sail from their respective bases at 1400 and the naval ferry barges from Kamish Burun at dusk. The naval ferry barges will arrive back in harbor at dawn. The E-boats and motor minesweepers will sail back together, passing Takil at dawn. Fighter escort has been requested for the E-boats and motor minesweepers while outward and homeward bound.

Western Black Sea:

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea informed Admiral, Black Sea that the sailing of the 12 naval ferry barges from Odessa loaded with assault guns had been postponed owing to the weather. He has been ordered to send all naval ferry barges loaded with assault guns to Eupatoria immediately and to cancel sailings only in the worst weather conditions. Fog is no reason for delaying sailings.

South Coast Crimea:

Motor minesweeper R 208, which has been assigned to the Crimea group, received orders to proceed alone to Theodosia, sailing from Sevastopol on the evening of 17 November to arrive at Theodosia at about 0500 on 18 November. Course directions and new minefield reports for the south coast of the Crimea will be obtained from Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast.

Five naval ferry barges intended for operations in Kerch put into Theodosia from Sevastopol at 0900 and will sail for Kamish Burun during the forenoon of 18 November.

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Minesweeping Activity:

Because of suspected minelaying during an enemy air raid on Sevastopol yesterday, 4 motor minesweepers (MA) carried out a sweep 4 miles north of the harbor entrance, where mines were reported to have been dropped. The boats made a circuit of 1,000 meters with propesa gear, 10-meter pendant. No mines swept.

FZ-boats checked the waters off Sevastopol harbor entrance for ground mines. The boats covered the area 24 times with towed loop gear, but no mines were swept. Minesweeping planes swept one mine about 6.5 miles west southwest of Ochakov.

Authority of C-in-C, Armed Forces, Crimea with regard to naval warfare:

In OKW/WFST Op H 05176/43 gch. dated 23 October 1943, Commanding General, Army Group A was appointed C-in-C, Armed Forces, Crimea. For the time being he has delegated his authority to Commanding General, 17 Army H.Q. It is our opinion that such authority refers only to the war on land. We understand that in all matters concerning naval warfare, including sea transportation, Admiral, Black Sea is directly responsible to Group South. Army Group A and 17th Army H.Q. seem to be of a different opinion and apparently regard themselves as authorized to issue orders.

To prevent difficulties arising and especially to avoid any wrong movements in sea transportation, Group South has been asked in ASM gklos 759/4AS dated 17 November to clear up this matter once and for all and to inform Army Group A and 17th Army H.Q. accordingly.

Supply Traffic:

A BV plane of the close air escort reported an enemy submarine attack on the naval transport No. 25 (DANUBIUS) convoy off Eupatoria at about 0700.

A fan of three torpedoes was fired at submarine chaser ROSITA, followed by a fan of two at DANUBIUS. Neither ship was hit. ROSITA dropped depth charges.

The serious shortage of depth charges as a result of delays in delivery from Germany is hampering anti-submarine activity here.

Convoys off the south Crimean coast and in the western Black Sea ran without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance was hampered by weather conditions. No reconnaissance was possible at all during the night, while during the day only the central and eastern Black Sea was examined. The following ships were reported: 1 coastal vessel, course south, off Ochenchiri; 3 coastal vessels, course east, between Ochenchiri and Sukhun; 1 ship, probably a destroyer, course southeast, about 35 miles west-southwest of Tuapse.

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Anti-submarine operations in the waters off Eupatoria during the night net with no success.

Enemy Shipping in Port:

Batum: Heavy cruiser KRASNYY KAVKAS, light cruiser KRASNYY KRIM, 1 destroyer of the STOROJEVEY class, 1 of the CHEVNY class and 1 of the FRUNSE class, 13 M.T.B.s of which 5 were beached, the hulls of 2 torpedoboats, 5 motor minesweepers, 4 submarines, 1 cargo-passenger vessel of 8,500 tons, 3 tankers, each 7,000 tons, 1 freighter of about 3,500 tons, 1 freighter of about 2,500 tons, 3 freighters, each about 2,000 tons, 1 freighter of about 4,500 tons, 1 floating crane, 15 coastal vessels and barges totaling approximately 10,000 tons, and about 25 boats.

Ochenchiri: 8 motor minesweepers of which 2 were beached, 2 freighters totaling 1,800 tons, 1 coastal vessel of 300 tons, and 12 boats, some beached.

Sukhum: 2 motor minesweepers, 1 coastal vessel and approximately 35 boats, some beached.

A radio intercept report stated that the position of an unidentified vessel about 20 miles west-southwest of Sochi was transmitted to a minesweeper. One destroyer was detected off the central part of the east coast.

Main Naval D/F Station reported:

During the day, continuous activity of small vessels in the eastern Black Sea, decreasing during the evening and including the following boats: in the northern part 5 M.T.B.s and 1 minesweeper, in the central to the southern parts 4 M.T.B.s, 1 motor gunboat and 1 minesweeper. Another destroyer was detected in the evening either off the central part of the east coast or off Tuapse. Submarines detected: 4 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as west and southwest of the Crimea. During the evening probably 1 submarine returning to the southeast from Tuapse.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Odessa-Cape Khersonese: SE winds, force 5, in squalls up to force 7. Cape Khersonese Kerch: E - NE winds, force 4, increasing during the day to force 5 or 6. Fog or overhead fog generally, clearing during the forenoon, then cloudy to fair, visibility 5 - 10 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a) In general, the night of 17/18 November passed quietly for the various patrol lines.

The patrol lines off Kerch Bay and Kamish Burun made no contact with the enemy.

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At 1700 the naval ferry barges in patrol line off Eltigen shelled the beachhead and at 1837 destroyed a small landing boat off the coast south of Eltigen. The beachhead was then shelled a second time. No enemy convoys observed.

The E-boats and motor minesweepers sighted 2 M.T.B.s and 4 small craft off Cape Tuzla. They were making off to the east. No other ships were sighted.

- b) The batteries of Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 shelled 5 gunboats off Cape Panaghia. Smoke was seen to come from one of the boats which stopped. The boats then laid a smoke screen and escaped out of range in a southerly direction. Enemy vessels on a northerly course off Cape Tuzla were also fired on. The enemy again laid a smoke screen. Our batteries were machine-gunned by low-flying planes. A few horses were killed and 1 truck was damaged, but no other damage was caused. No casualties.

c) Land Situation:

Only patrol activity and slight shelling at the Baksy beachhead and on the northern front. An enemy company attack across the Sivash about 4 km. west of Chuchak was repulsed.

Then fighting ceased east of Bulganak during the night of 16/17 November, 1,100 enemy dead were counted.

- d) In reply to an enquiry sent to Group South, asking why the Army was opposed to the suggestion to mop up the Eltigen beachhead from the sea, it was stated that the necessary forces for such an operation were not at present available. 17th Army H.Q. is however, in favor of a quick mopping-up operation and is making the necessary preparations.

The following operations are planned for the night of 18/19 November:

- 1.) Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will occupy the patrol line between Chongelek and Cape Takil.
- 2.) 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla has been allocated the following positions:
 - a) 4 naval ferry barges in patrol line off Kerch Bay.
 - b) 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun.
 - c) The 5 naval ferry barges which are being transferred to Kerch from Sevastopol and which sailed from Theodosia at 1100, are to form a patrol line north of Chongelek, concentrating on the waters off Eltigen.

The patrol lines will be occupied during the hours of darkness. Commanders, 1st E-Boat Flotilla and 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla have been instructed accordingly.

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Fighter escort has been requested for the E-boats leaving and entering their base.

Three E-boats sailed from Ivan Baba at 1430. Owing to the weather (NE, force 6), they were forced to abandon their position at 2000 and return to Ivan Baba.

The naval ferry barges cannot sail from Kamish Burun because of the strong northeasterly gale. The wind is blowing directly across the harbor and the boats cannot leave the quayside. In such weather the enemy would be unable to land troops or supplies at the beachhead. Hence the only patrols will be off Eltigen, where the 5 naval ferry barges which left Theodosia took up position at 2130.

Western-Black Sea:

Despite the bad weather conditions, 2 convoys, each consisting of 6 naval ferry barges carrying 16 assault guns, 17 trucks and 80 tons of ammunition, sailed from Odessa for Eupatoria at 0330. Because of the southeasterly gale, force 6, the convoys will probably have to be diverted to Ak Mechet.

As a result of the weather forecast for the northwestern Black Sea (wind increasing from SE), Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea received orders at 1220 to divert the 2 convoys to Ak Mechet.

At 1547 the convoys were attacked 12 miles south of Tendra by 6 torpedo planes which launched 4 torpedoes. None of the crew was hit. Naval Harbor Master, Ak Mechet reported that mines were probably laid by an enemy plane off the harbor entrance. He was then ordered to lay buoys to mark the position where the mines were dropped and to station a pilot boat outside the harbor to guide incoming vessels. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast received orders to inform the convoys carrying the assault guns of the position of the suspected minelaying and of the presence of the pilot boat. Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla is checking the area for non-contact mines and possible moored mines.

South Coast Crimea:

Motor minesweeper R 208, which sailed from Sevastopol for Kerch to bring the operational force up to full strength, has arrived in Theodosia.

Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla has been ordered to send naval ferry barges F 301, F 316 and F 446, which were out of action, from Kamish Burun to Theodosia at 2200. The boats on patrol were informed of this.

Sailing later cancelled owing to the weather.

At 1715 U 18 torpedoed and sank a freighter of 1,500 tons in air grid square 94124.

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Minesweeping Activity:

Two motor minesweepers (RA) carried out check sweeps with Oropesa gear, 10 meter pendant in the northwest entrance to Sevastopol. No mines were swept.

FZ-boats checked for ground mines off Sevastopol harbor entrance, covering the area eight times. No mines were swept. Two motor minesweepers (RA) were shooting up marker buoys in minefield S 47, west of Sevastopol.

Minesweeping planes swept 1 mines in the Danube.

Supply Traffic:

With the exception of the torpedo plane attack south of Tendra on the two convoys carrying assault guns, no special incidents were reported by convoys in the western Black Sea and off the south Crimean coast.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

After yesterday's report on the enemy situation, further aerial photographs were taken of shipping in the ports in the Chobi estuary and in Poti harbor.

The following ships were observed:

Chobi estuary: The hull of a battleship of the KIROV class, hulls of 2 large destroyers of the LENINGRAD class, 2 unfinished escort vessels, 1 unfinished ship thought to be a torpedoboot, 2 minesweepers, 1 unfinished boat thought to be a minesweeper, 2 submarines (length 80 meters), 1 large motor minesweeper, 1 small motor minesweeper, 4 M.T.B.s, 1 "G 6" M.T.B., 1 floating gun battery (3 guns), 2 paddle-steamers, 1 icebreaker, 1 tanker of about 7,000 tons, 1 freighter of about 4,000 tons, 5 freighters, each about 2,000 tons, 1 freighter of about 1,500 tons, 2 coastal vessels, 5 barges of about 600 tons, 1 floating crane, training ship KOMINTERN and 3 freighters acting as a breakwater.

Poti: 1 battleship with steam up, 2 heavy cruisers of the KIROV class (one with steam up), the hull of a cruiser of the KIROV class, 1 destroyer of the "STOROJEVEY" class, 1 destroyer of the GNEVNY class with steam up, 1 destroyer of the NESANOSHNIK class, 1 torpedoboot, 1 minesweeper, 8 submarines, 10 M.T.B.s, 10 motor minesweepers, 1 passenger-cargo vessel of 8,500 tons, 1 tanker of about 7,000 tons, 28 more freighters totaling 36,100 tons, 18 coastal vessels totaling 3,350 tons, 1 barge, 1 dredger, 1 motor launch, 2 floating docks and 2 floating cranes.

The large number of ships in Poti shows that the main part of the fleet has been transferred there from Eatum.

Situation 19 November:

Air reconnaissance reported lively activity of sailing vessels in the central and southeastern Black Sea and off the Turkish coast. No substantial change observed in the number of ships

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in ports on the Caucasus coast. A radio intercept report stated that cruiser KRASNY KRIM is thought to be at sea. Other radio intercept reports stated that the position of a vessel 20 miles southwest of Cape Pitsunda was transmitted to a M.T.B. and a motor gunboat.

Main Naval D/F Station Reported:

Activity of small vessels starting in the afternoon and continuing into the night.

In the area off the northern part of the east coast and in Kerch Strait: 1 minesweeper, 1 submarine chaser and 4 M.T.B.s were detected, and off the central to the southern part of the east coast 3 minesweepers, presumably coming from the southeast with a convoy. The radio report concerning a cruiser in the Tuapse area during the evening has not yet been verified from other sources.

Submarines detected: 2 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the waters west to southwest of the Crimea. Two more submarines are estimated to be in the operational area and a third in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea: E - SE winds, force 4, in the north, force 5 - 6, overcast, light showers, visibility 4 - 8 miles, Sevastopol - Yalta: E- NE winds, force 4, mainly overcast, visibility 6 - 8 miles.

Yalta - Kerch: NE winds, force 5, overcast, showers, visibility 4 - 8 miles.

Vice-Admiral Kieseritzky, Commanding Admiral, Black Sea went to Kerch with Lieutenant Commander (Gunnery) Filtzecker, German Naval Reserve, the 2nd Staff Officer, and Lieutenant (Gunnery) Duwe, German Naval Reserve, the Adjutant, to inspect naval forces stationed there and to confer decorations.

At about 1230 during an air raid on Kamish Burun the Commanding Admiral and the 2nd Staff Officer were killed in action with German forces engaged in blocking Kerch. The Adjutant and Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla (Acting Lieutenant Commander Mehler) were seriously wounded.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) Despite the rough sea, 5 naval ferry barges maintained their patrol positions off Eltigen during the night of 18/19 November and entered Kamish Burun at 0500. No contact was made with the enemy. The other patrols were canceled - see yesterday's War Diary.

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Since daybreak, there have been continuous air raids on Kamish Burun and the naval ferry barges there have been bombed and machine-gunned. In the course of these raids F 170 suffered 3 direct hits; while F 139 and F 446 were both hit once. Other naval ferry barges were also damaged.

- b) Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 reported that the Eltigen beachhead had again received supplies from the air.

4th Battery bombarded Kolonka and Cape Kany. 3rd Battery shot down one IL 2 plane.

- c) Only slight shelling and patrol activity on all fronts. No changes on the northern front.

The fact that the enemy is continuously supplying the Eltigen beachhead from the air proves that supplies coming by sea are still being cut off in Kerch Strait by our patrols.

At the Baksy beachhead the infantry was regrouped and heavy artillery was arriving. In addition to 5 divisions of artillery, several Army artillery regiments and a new armored division have been observed. It is thought that the Russians are planning an attack on our weakly manned main defense line.

Our own guns were active at the Baksy beachhead against enemy concentrations and batteries on Kossa Chushka.

- d) When Lieutenant Commander Mehler was wounded, Lieutenant Bastian was appointed senior operational officer of the naval ferry barges engaged in Kerch Strait.

The following operations are planned for the night of 19/20 November:

5 naval ferry barges in patrol line off Eltigen, 3 naval ferry barges in patrol line off Kerch.

At 1730 the boats occupied the patrol. Owing to heavy seas, NE winds, force 5 - 6, they could not maintain position and had to return to Kamish Burun at 1900. Nothing was sighted during this time.

There were no E-boat-or motor minesweeper operations owing to the weather.

Western Black Sea:

Naval Shore Commander, Ukraine reported that on 18 November naval ferry barge F 395 was shelled by a 4 - 7.5 cm. gun in the Dnieper estuary off Skadovsk. No damage.

From the 2 convoys which sailed from Odessa on 18 November loaded with assault guns, 6 naval ferry barges put in to Ak Mechet and 4 into Eupatoria after coming through a severe gale. The naval ferry barges, two of which had to return to Odessa with the assistance of tugs, suffered considerable damage from heavy seas.

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FZ 8 and FZ 11 sailed from Sevastopol for Ak Mechet to check the position off Ak Mechet harbor entrance where mines were suspected. Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, has received orders that after they have completed this sweep, these boats are to be stationed in Ak Mechet until further notice. The boats are to be equipped with gear to deal with moored mines.

Naval Port Commander, Sevastopol reported that submarine chasers No. 310 and 312 sailed for an anti-submarine patrol between Eupatoria and Tarkhankutzki.

As E-boat S 45 has completed the required number of hours at sea, she has been transferred from Ivan Baba to Balaklava for coastal defense duties.

At 2325 E-boat S 42 put out from Balaklava for a refit in Constantza.

Minesweeping Activity:

Minesweeping planes could not operate in the Danube Delta because of fog.

Supply Traffic:

About 0400 some 40 miles southwest of Tarkhankutzki, an ineffective submarine attack was made on the XANTEN convoy, consisting of 3 submarine chasers and "MT I". The submarine dived when our ships opened fire.

All other convoys in the western Black Sea and off the Crimean coast ran as scheduled without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Night air reconnaissance detected no enemy shipping movements off the Caucasus coast, in the southern and western Black Sea or in the area south of the Crimea. Air reconnaissance flown over the entire Black Sea in varying degrees of visibility during the day also failed to report any enemy shipping.

A radio intercept report stated that a motor gunboat and a M.T.B. received the position of an unidentified vessel 4 miles south of Tuapse (probably one of our U-boats). A minesweeper received the position of an unidentified vessel 25 miles south-southwest of Tuapse.

Main Naval D/F Station reported that activity of small vessels is still on the decrease along the whole of the east coast of the Black Sea. During the evening, a destroyer was detected in the southeastern Black Sea. The only other boat intercepted was a M.T.B. off Batun.

Submarines detected: 1 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as west and southwest of the Crimea. Four more submarines are thought to be in the operational area.

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Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

General: NE - E winds, force 5 - 6.

Yalta - Cape Kersonese: NE - E winds, force 4 - 3, fair after early fog, visibility 10 - 15 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) All quiet during the night of 19/20 November. Three naval ferry barges were off Eltigen beachhead until dawn, but had nothing to report.

Apparently the enemy did not attempt to send supplies across the sea owing to the weather (NE winds, force 6). The fact that the 3 naval ferry barges off Eltigen held out in spite of the weather is highly commendable. The heavy air raids on Kamish Burun and the artillery bombardment of the port are increasing in violence every hour. In an air raid on the port at 1330, naval ferry barge F 386 was destroyed and F 307 damaged.

Eight of the 15 naval ferry barges in the Kerch operations have been knocked out by enemy action or sea damage. Replacements must be sent.

We cannot afford the increased daily losses of naval ferry barges engaged in the Kerch operations. If further losses are incurred, it will not be possible to meet Army demands to supply the Crimea and keep Kerch Strait closed.

Some indication of the difficult supply situation at the Eltigen beachhead was revealed in a Russian plain language radiogram which was intercepted. The radiogram stated that ammunition had run out and that no responsibility for the defense of the beachhead could be accepted from the day after tomorrow unless the situation was remedied.

b) Land Situation:

At 0500, after heavy preparatory fire, the enemy launched the expected attack against the southern flank of the Baksy beachhead between Hill 133.3 and the coast. The main attack took the form of an infantry thrust supported by 20 tanks 1 km. south of Bulganak, where local penetrations into our lines were made. Further attacks were repulsed and the breakthrough was cut off. A counter-attack from Kerch in a northerly direction is under way. The situation is considered quite favorable.

With the exception of slight shelling, nothing to report from the northern front.

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Operations planned for the night of 20/21 November:

The senior operational officer of the naval ferry barges in Kerch has been informed that the enemy attack on the southern flank of the Eaksy beachhead has started and that enemy naval support may be expected in the form of further landings or bombardment, especially in Kerch Bay. He has also been instructed that enemy supplies to the Eltigen beachhead must be cut off at all coasts to prevent the enemy strengthening their position there. He was ordered to send 4 naval ferry barges to patrol off Kerch Bay and 4 more to patrol off Eltigen from dusk to dawn. Only in extremely bad weather conditions were patrols to be canceled.

The naval ferry barges occupied their patrol lines at dusk. As 2 naval ferry barges were knocked out in the air raid on Kamish Burun at noon, there were only 3 boats in each patrol line. After the weather improved, 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla sailed from Ivan Baba at 1920 to strengthen the patrol line off Eltigen. The boats were in position at 2100.

Western Black Sea:

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea received orders to send SANTA FE immediately from Odessa to Sevastopol with a strong escort. She will carry 15 assault guns which have just arrived and 3 which were brought by naval ferry barge. Three more assault guns were reloaded into naval ferry barges F 401 and F 395. Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to transfer F 329, F 369, F 340, F 559, F 472, and F 594 with full supplies of ammunition, and if possible with some reserve ammunition too, from Sevastopol to Theodosia. The boats will operate in Kerch in place of the naval ferry barges which have been put out of action. Sailing time 1600.

The senior operational officer received instructions to transfer naval ferry barges F 137, F 446, F 310, F 316, F 170, F 139, F 307 and F 535 from Kamish Burun to Sevastopol for repairs. They will sail from Kamish Burun at dusk on 20 November. Five of them will first call at Theodosia and 2 will put in to Ivan Baba for loading. It is intended to dispatch the boats from Theodosia and Ivan Baba on the evening of 21 November.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast will use the naval ferry barges proceeding from Theodosia to Sevastopol as convoy escorts should the need arise.

Minesweeping Activity:

The suspected mine positions off the entrance to the harbor of Ak Mechet were checked by FZ 8 and FZ 11 with towed loop gear. In 18 sweeps, no mines found.

FZ-boats searched for ground mines off the harbor entrance to Sevastopol. In 20 sweeps, no mines were found.

Motor minesweepers (RA) shot up the marker buoy of S 47 west of Sevastopol.

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Supply Traffic:

Convoys off the Crimean coast and in the western Black Sea ran without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance was flown over the entire Black Sea area, concentrating especially on the northeastern waters and southeastern Crimea. Nothing to report. Six landing craft were located in Tenriuk Bay heading north, otherwise no shipping movements in the Sea of Azov. No change observed in the harbors on the Sea of Azov compared with previous days.

Main Naval D/F Station reported that no enemy surface force movements could be detected from the slight radio traffic during the night.

Submarines detected: 3 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the area west and southwest of the Crimea. Two more submarines are thought to be in the operational area and 1 submarine is in an unidentified position in the eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Light variable winds, mainly E - NE, mainly overcast, local showers, visibility 6 - 10 miles, fog-banks.

The following details are now known about the death of the Commanding Admiral and the 2nd Staff Officer:

Some distance from the port of Kamish Burun, where the Commanding Admiral was going to inspect his naval forces engaged in Kerch Strait, the car in which he was traveling, which was undoubtedly recognized, was bombed and machine-gunned by 4 IL 2 planes. The car tried to reach a shelter before the bombs exploded, but was unable to get to the nearest shelter in time. The Commanding Admiral, the 2nd Staff Officer and the driver were killed instantly by the blast. Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla and the Commanding Admiral's Adjutant were seriously wounded. In Order 6737 dated 20 November 1943, the Personnel Office, Naval High Command appointed Rear Admiral Brinkmann, ex-Chief of Staff, Naval Group South, to the post of Commanding Admiral, Black Sea. Until his arrival the duties of Commanding Admiral will be carried out by Chief of Staff Admiral, Black Sea.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) Between 1900 and 2135 on the night of 20/21 November, the 3 naval ferry barges in the patrol line off Eltigen had several engagements with enemy landing craft, which were escorted by motor gunboats. Persistent enemy attempts to take supplies to the beachhead were frustrated and only 3 boats were able to break through. Our boats sank 1 fully loaded landing craft and damaged a second so seriously that it probably sank. Most of the enemy craft were forced to withdraw. Our own casualties were slight.

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From 2130 3 boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla were in position south of Eltigen. The night was clear but up to 0420 no enemy ships were sighted. At about 0440 8 landing craft and 2 motor gunboats were sighted proceeding from Cape Tuzla towards Eltigen. The force, which was attempting to reach the beachhead in the half light, was attacked by our boats. Two medium landing craft were sunk. The enemy boats opened fire with machine-guns and 4.5 cm. guns in an attempt to break through with the support of their heavy shore batteries. With the exception of 1 motor gunboat and 2 landing craft, which were fired on by our own shore batteries, the enemy was forced to withdraw to the east. Because of an enemy fighter attack, a further engagement with a landing craft which had stopped had to be broken off after several hits had been scored on the boat. On their way back, the E-boats were bombed and machine-gunned by bombers, fighters and ground attack planes. Our boats suffered no losses.

The patrol line off Kerch Bay had nothing to report.

The losses sustained by naval ferry barges and motor minesweepers in Kerch Strait as a result of air raids on the port of Kamish Burun and air attacks on the boats themselves while proceeding to or returning from operations have reached such proportions that it will not be possible to carry on with the present patrol arrangements. To emphasize my repeated requests for the mopping up of the Eltigen beachhead, I sent the following communication to 17th Army H.Q.

"In the course of daily naval operations in Kerch aimed at preventing enemy supplies from reaching the Eltigen beachhead, our forces have suffer serious losses at the hands of the enemy, mainly caused by air raids on and shelling of Kamish Burun. Each day the enemy makes increasing efforts to annihilate the naval forces which have so far prevented reinforcements and supplies from reaching the Eltigen beachhead during the hours of darkness. Further losses may therefore be expected. As continual replacements cannot be made, within a short time it will no longer be possible to maintain an effective night blockade of the Eltigen beachhead."

Apart from this, the men, who are at sea night after night, are unable to take their well-deserved sleep or eat their meals in peace during the day because of continuous air raids. They are showing signs of serious nervous tension.

Commander, 3rd Landing Craft Flotilla reported that during the artillery bombardment on 20 November it was only the energetic intervention of all officers which made it possible to get the boats ready and finally put out.

b) Land Situation:

Enemy attacks on the Baksy beachhead were repulsed and heavy casualties inflicted. After bitter fighting, the entire main defense line is once more in our hands. 18 tanks were destroyed. Continuation of enemy attacks during the day is probable.

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Only slight artillery fire on the northern front and on the Baksy beachhead. Our own patrols were active at the Eltigen beachhead. More air transports to the beachhead were seen.

c) Partisan Activity:

At about 0930 35 km. southeast of Simferopol, a surprise attack was made by partisans on 24 armed members of the Naval Administration and Supply Department who had been detailed to protect a clothing store.

Casualties: 13 men killed including 7 officials, also 1 man seriously wounded and 3 men slightly wounded.

Defensive action was first taken by a Rumanian company, a Howitzer battery and 1 non-commissioned officer and 20 men of 19th Naval Motorized Detachment, with the assistance of an armored truck mounting 2 cm. anti-aircraft guns. Enemy losses were not ascertained. The bodies of the dead men were recovered. They were badly mutilated.

Operations planned for the night of 21/22 November:

Commander, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, received orders to station 5 boats in the patrol line off the Eltigen beachhead. They are to sail in time to reach Takil by 1600. After last night's activity, it would seem that the enemy is attempting to get supplies through to the beachhead during evening twilight and morning half light on the assumption that our patrol line is not occupied at that time. Our boats are therefore to be in position as early as possible and to return as late as possible. The senior operational officer of the naval ferry barges received orders to station 3 boats in the patrol line off Kerch Bay and 3 off Kamish Burun from dusk onwards.

Motor minesweepers and naval ferry barges were in position at nightfall.

The fifth motor minesweeper was attacked and damaged by 9 bombers and ground attack planes off Cape Chauda and had to return to Theodosia owing to loss of fuel. One man was seriously wounded.

Western Black Sea:

Group South has inquired when the transfer of naval gunnery lighters Nos. 2 and 4 to the Aegean could be expected to take place. The reply was as follows:

- a) Lighter No. 4 is not ready to sail as she is acting as a floating battery in the Dnieper estuary near Pervoneisk.
- b) Lighter No. 2 is standing by in Theodosia in anticipation of enemy landings in Theodosia Bay or Kerch Strait.

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Although these vessels leak and have engine defects, they are indispensable in the present situation, as there are no other craft available to take over the important duties which they are now carrying out. Now that the Crimea is entirely dependent on supplies brought by sea, enemy submarine activity is increasing. Enemy submarines are concentrating on the Eupatoria-Tarkhankutzki area and the waters to the west of Tarkhankutzki. Our anti-submarine patrols must therefore be intensified. Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla has been ordered to sail immediately from Sevastopol with submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 and to patrol in large air grid squares 1660, 1680 and 2670 and squares 2651, 2652, 2654, 2655, 2657 and 2658. Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla was reminded that a submarine was attacked by our submarine chasers and probably damaged in the afternoon of 21 November in a position 3.5 miles from "Marco Polo", bearing 085°. When proceeding to the patrol area, the ships are to check the place where the attack was made and report their findings by radio.

Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla was also informed that 2 vessels of 23rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla were on anti-submarine patrol in Eupatoria Bay east of 32° 30' E. These 2 vessels bring the total number of ships on anti-submarine patrol up to nine.

Naval Shore Commander Caucasus has been ordered to send 9 naval ferry barges of the Kerch forces at 1500 with DRESDEN from Theodosia to Sevastopol. Three naval ferry barges will call at Yalta for loading. Separate orders will then be issued for these craft to continue to Sevastopol. Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus reported that only 5 naval ferry barges could sail for Sevastopol and 2 for Yalta at 1500. One naval ferry barge is not yet ready for transfer and the spare parts for another have only just arrived in Theodosia.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus received orders for Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla to sail from Theodosia at 0930 on 22 November with 6 naval ferry barges to occupy the patrol line in Kerch, concentrating especially on the Eltigen beachhead. Speed to be calculated to pass Cape Takil at 1600.

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus has instructed Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla on the general situation, the particular duties of the naval ferry barges and arrangements for co-operation with shore batteries. They will enter Kamish Burun at dawn on 23 November where Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla will take over command of the Kerch operations from Lieutenant Bastian.

At 0045 U 18 reported in radiogram 2109:

"1.) During daylight operations off the port of Tuapse, we were located at 1300 either from the land or by planes and were attacked with 25 depth charges. Starboard motor and port Diesel engine out of action. Cannot yet say when Diesel engine will be working again. Starboard main clutch badly bent. Other damage repaired by crew with exception of one foundation bolt in port Diesel engine."

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At 0115 U 18 reported port Diesel engine working on 5 cylinders. She also announced her intention of returning to her former position.

As U 18 had only 1 torpedo on-board and only 1 engine was working, she was ordered to return to Constantea via the northern route. The inside position in the U-boat formation will be unoccupied for the time being because of strong enemy anti-submarine measures in that area.

Enemy Air Activity:

At 1345 Ivan Baba was raided by 10 IL 2 planes which dropped 60 to 70 medium-sized bombs without causing any damage. Three planes were brought down by light anti-aircraft fire (Navy and Air Force).

Minesweeping Activity:

The north-south entrance to Ak Mechet was checked by FZ-boats with oropesa gear. No mines were swept. FZ-boats made a ground mine check off Sevastopol harbor entrance. No minesweeping planes operated in the Danube owing to the weather.

Supply Traffic:

At 1020 off Cape Lukull, enemy planes made a torpedo attack on one of our convoys sailing from Eupatoria to Sevastopol. One plane was seen to be shot down. No damage to our ships was reported. Nothing to report from other convoys in the western Black Sea and off the Crimean coast.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

No enemy shipping movements were detected by night air reconnaissance, which located one of our own U-boats off Tuapse. No reconnaissance flights over the Black Sea during the day owing to the weather and the demands for convoy escorts. A radio intercept report stated that the position of an unidentified vessel about 18 miles southeast of Cape Takil was transmitted to an M.T.D.

Main Naval D/F Station reported that radio traffic showed activity of small vessels decreasing during the evening. One minesweeper in the southeastern Black Sea was the only enemy ship detected at night.

Submarines detected: 5 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the waters west of the Crimea. Two other submarines are probably in the operational area. In the evening 1 submarine was detected south of Kerch Peninsula and another in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Variable winds, force 1 - 3, mainly overcast, slight rain, fog-banks, otherwise visibility 6 - 10 miles.

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At 1400 the bodies of the Commanding Admiral, Vice Admiral Kieseritzky and his 2nd Staff Officer were laid to rest in the military cemetery in Simferopol. High-ranking officers of the Armed Forces in this area were present at the ceremony.

I took over the duties of Commanding Admiral, Black Sea.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) All quiet in the various patrol lines. Motor minesweepers and naval ferry barges reported no special incidents. No enemy convoys attempted to bring supplies.
- b) On 21 November, 2nd Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 shelled and sank 1 boat off Eltigen and damaged another,

4th Battery fired at installations on Kossa Chuohka. Results could not be seen.

It was observed that the Eltigen beachhead was still being supplied from the air.

c) Land Situation:

Lively patrol activity on the southern flank at the Baksy beachhead. The appearance of new infantry divisions and another armored regiment, together with the fact that infantry is being brought up to the front line, indicated that enemy attacks are about to start again. Several reconnaissance thrusts in the beachhead in battalion strength were repulsed. Shelling along the whole of the main defense line. The enemy is bringing up reinforcements to the northern sector of the beachhead. An enemy attack was repulsed in the evening south of Ashkadan. Lively enemy entrenchment on the northern front, especially along the Tartar Wall south of Perekop. No large-scale fighting. The Perekop-Kherson railway line is working again.

Operations planned for the night of 22/23 November:

- 1.) Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus was ordered to station 3 naval ferry barges in the patrol line off Kamish Durun and 3 off Kerch Bay.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla aboard F 594, north of Chongolek, will be concentrating on Eltigen with 6 naval ferry barges.

- 2.) Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will patrol between Cape Takil and Chongolek. Boats will pass Takil outward bound at 1630 and homeward bound at 0430.

Fighter escort has been requested until dusk for the outward voyage and from daybreak until arrival in Ivan Baba for the return voyage.

The above patrol lines were occupied from dusk.

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The naval ferry barges off Eltigen had 3 brief engagements with the enemy between 1748 and 1836. Details will be given in tomorrow's War Diary.

Western Black Sea:

At 1100 the steamer SANTA FE loaded with 12 assault guns, ammunition, fuel and motor vehicles sailed from Odessa for Sevastopol. She is being escorted by 2 destroyers and 3 motor minesweepers.

Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla reported that a periscope was sighted by submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 10 miles south of Tarkhankutzki. Three depth charges were dropped, but no results were observed. Anti-submarine operations are being continued.

A radio intercept report from Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria stated that a submarine had been operating in air grid square 2630 for the past three days. The patrol area assigned to Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla (see War Diary 21 November), has been enlarged to cover this grid square. Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla has been informed accordingly.

Kerch Strait:

The naval ferry barges which left Theodosia at 1015 under the command of Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla were attacked at 1315 by 12 bombers while proceeding to the patrol line in Kerch Strait. No casualties.

Nothing to report from U-boat's at sea.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats again checked Ak Mochet harbor entrance with oropesa gear. No mines were swept. What was taken to be minelaying was therefore probably only bomb jettisoning.

Minesweeping planes did not operate in the Danube Delta because of the weather.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys in the western Black Sea and off the Crimean coast ran as scheduled. An additional entry should be made under 21 November as the KRONOS and ANNA convoy was attacked by 3 torpedo planes off Sevastopol from a height of 50 meters. Three torpedoes (surface runners), machine-gunfire. No damage to our ships. One DB3 was brought down.

Conversion of Naval Ferry Barges (Guns):

The number of naval ferry barges (guns) available is inadequate to meet the present situation in the Black Sea. During the past few weeks, the delivery of these boats has been postponed again and again despite repeated requests from Admiral, Black Sea.

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In Order 2243 dated 3 August 1943, Construction Inspectorate, Linn reported that no date could yet be given for the delivery of the 4 naval ferry barges which were to be converted, because there were no blueprints and materials - especially armor plating and auxiliary generators - were in short supply.

As was reported later, the date of delivery for the first two should have been 28 October and for the third 30 October. The date of delivery for the fourth boat could not be given.

The completion of these 4 naval ferry barges (guns) must be given priority in view of the Navy's heavy responsibilities in the defense of the Crimea, which may have a decisive effect on the war.

It should also be remembered that the Danube will probably not be navigable after the middle of December because of ice.

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Sirferopol Enemy Situation:

Night air reconnaissance did not detect any enemy shipping movements. During the day 3 planes flew air reconnaissance over the central and southeastern Black Sea and along the Caucasus coast. Nothing was sighted.

Main Naval D/F Station reported that the slight activity of small vessels continued off the east coast of the Black Sea. Nothing was detected off the northern and central parts of the east coast. Two M.T.B.s were detected at night in the south. Early on 24 November a destroyer was detected, probably in the southeastern Black Sea. In the evening and during the night activity of motor launches or gunboats was detected in the Sea of Azov (a total of 4 boats).

Submarines detected: 3 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the west coast of the Crimea, 5 more probably in the operational area, also 3 more in unidentified positions.

This increased Russian submarine activity clearly indicated that the enemy is making every effort to disrupt our convoy supplies and thus cut off our only supply route to the Crimea. It is vital that we should continue our systematic anti-submarine patrols in the Tarkhankutzki-Eupatoria area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea-Kerch: SE - S winds, force 4 - 5, overcast, rain, visibility 6 miles. Weather front passing from the west with S - SW winds temporarily increasing to force 6, cloudy, visibility 15 miles, local showers.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) Between 1730 and 1800 on 22 November the naval ferry barges in patrol line off Eitigen had several engagements with enemy motor gunboats and landing craft. A motor gunboat damaged by gunfire was rammed and sunk. One landing craft was set on fire and another one badly damaged. No further enemy attempts to break

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through were observed off Eltigen between 1800 and daybreak. Our boats suffered only superficial damage.

The naval ferry barges on patrol off Kerch and Kamish Burun and the E-boats in the southern part of Kerch did not sight any enemy ships. Visibility was good.

- b) 3rd Battery, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 shelled Kossa Chushka and opened fire on a freighter which thereupon withdrew. 4th Battery shelled Kolonka and fired on a gunboat from which smoke was seen to come. Partisans attacked searchlight positions without effect.

Enemy batteries shelled the empty port of Kamish Burun during the evening.

c) Land Situation:

Supplying of the Eltigen beachhead from the air, which is now going on during the night as well, proves how very serious the supply situation is for the enemy. 17th Army H.Q. has been requested several times to make the most of this very favorable situation and mop up the beachhead, especially as it will probably not be possible for the Navy to continue with the present almost impenetrable night blockade if further losses are suffered.

Nothing to report from the northern front or the Baksy beachhead except slight patrol activity and artillery fire. An enemy patrol, which landed on the Chongar Peninsula about 12 miles southwest of Genichesk was forced to withdraw and an enemy attack south of Ashkadan was repulsed. Harassing fire, otherwise all quiet.

Operations planned for the night of 23/24 November:

- 1.) Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla, was ordered to send naval ferry barges to occupy the patrol line off Kerch Bay and 2 to occupy a patrol line off Kamish Burun.
- 2.) Four boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will patrol off Eltigen. Two boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla will be in position between Cape Takil and Chongelek. Commander will be Lieutenant (S.G.) Seevers, 1st E-Boat Flotilla. E-boats and motor minesweepers will go to each other's assistance by agreed signal in the event of contact with the enemy.

The patrol forces of 1.) and 2.) were ordered to be in position at dusk. The Commanders were again reminded that the supply situation for the enemy at the Eltigen beachhead was catastrophic and that the enemy was doing their utmost to remedy the situation by bringing supplies across the sea in the half light and during the night.

The boats mentioned in 1.) and 2.) were in position at the appointed time, but the E-boats and motor minesweepers had to return at 1910 as they would not have been able to use their armament owing to E-SE winds, force 4 - 5, sea 3 - 4 and heavy swell. It would not have been possible for the enemy to land at Eltigen in such weather.

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Western Black Sea:

Special Command, Varna reported that an enemy submarine was firing at a steamer 2 miles off Kaliakra. As there is no steamer in the area mentioned, this must be a mistake. Probably it was the sinking of a floating mine by submarine chaser No. 103 about 10 miles west of Kaliakra which was observed.

Naval ferry barge F 536 sank about 20 miles north of Sulina during a gale. Nine men of the crew were rescued. F 536 was sailing from Odessa to Sulina with a towed convoy.

4th Air Force was informed that the enemy batteries on Kimburn Peninsula were a threat to our traffic in the Dnieper estuary east of Perovomeisk and was asked to attack the batteries, as no naval forces were available for this purpose.

Group South has agreed to leave naval gunnery lighters Nos. 4 and 2 in the Black Sea, after taking into account present developments as well as the condition of the engines and the general state of the boats.

The steamer SANTA FE sank at 0643 about 5 miles south of Eupatoria. She was probably torpedoed by a submarine, although it is possible that she may have struck a mine. The position where the explosion occurred will be checked by motor minesweepers on 24 Nov. Fire broke out in SANTA FE after an explosion forward. It was therefore not possible to take her in tow. 16 men are still missing. The steamer was escorted by 2 destroyers and 3 motor minesweepers.

Two submarine chaser groups (totaling 5 boats) have been ordered to operate in the Tarkhankutzki-Eupatoria area.

After the loss of SANTA FE off Eupatoria, it was pointed out to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea that the Tarkhankutzki-Sevastopol route was especially dangerous for shipping because of the presence of enemy submarines. The position of the enemy submarines suggests that the enemy is not yet aware of the route through the northwestern gap in the minefield. Until further notice, valuable convoys are to be diverted through this gap on both outward and homeward passage.

At 0855 about 6 miles west of Ak Mechet a submarine launched ineffective torpedoes at submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 which were on anti-submarine patrol.

At 0930 6 bombers, 4 torpedo planes and 2 fighters attacked the same boats off Tarkhankutzki with bombs, torpedoes and machine-guns. As a result of machine-gunfire 1 man was killed and 7 seriously wounded, among them Commander, 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla. The dead will be landed at Ak Mechet. The boats, which were only slightly damaged, will continue their anti-submarine patrol until tomorrow.

U 18, which is returning to base, signalled her E.T.A. at the rendezvous point for the Constantza escort as 0600 on 24 November.

The boat was informed of where our own convoys might be sighted. One motor minesweeper escort will meet U 18 at the appointed time.

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Radio Intercept Service reports and details of the air situation were passed on to the boats in the operational area.

The lack of regular air reconnaissance over coastal waters and the ports along the Caucasus coast has been felt more and more in past weeks, especially as the enemy has changed their convoy routes and has moved to the open sea lanes.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats checked the area off the Sevastopol harbor entrance for ground mines. In 22 sweeps no mines were found. Four FZ-boats searched for ground mines off Ak Mechet. Mines and Barrage Command, Sevastopol reported that the minefield in Strelitzkaya Bay was cleared on 22 November.

Supply Traffic:

With the exception of the submarine attack on the SANTA FE, convoys in the western Black Sea ran without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance flown during the day over the entire Black Sea in varying degrees of visibility located no enemy shipping. No reconnaissance flights along the Caucasus coast. No enemy shipping was located by night reconnaissance planes flying between 1800 and 2230 along the Caucasus coast as far as Cape Pitsunda, covering the area from the coast out to sea to a distance of 120 km.

A radio intercept report stated that 1 destroyer was located in the Novorossisk area. During the evening, Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported 2 minesweepers proceeding from the southeast off the central and northern parts of the east coast and 1 M.T.B. off the southern part of the east coast.

Three motor launches or gunboats were detected in the Sea of Azov during the afternoon.

No surface forces were detected at sea from radio traffic during the evening and night.

Submarines detected: 3 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the waters to the west and southwest of the Crimea. Six more were detected in the operational area from the general radio picture. One submarine was in an unidentified position.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea: SE - S winds, force 3 - 4, increasing in the afternoon to force 5 - 6, overcast, rain, visibility 3 - 6 miles.

Yalta-Kerch: SE winds, force 3 - 4, overcast, rain, visibility 5 - 8 miles.

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At 1035 a gale warning was given for west coast Crimea, later spreading to the east coast: Squalls, S winds, force 10.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a) Motor minesweepers and E-boats in patrol line off Eltigen returned at 1910 because of the weather (see War Diary 23 November). No enemy ships were sighted. Naval ferry barges were stationed off Kerch and off Kamish Burun from 1600 to 0430 during the night of 23/24 November. Nothing was sighted. Bombardment by enemy batteries from Kossa Tuzla. No casualties.

b) Land Situation:

Isolated patrols active on the northern front and at the Baksy beachhead. Otherwise a quiet night.

Situation remains unchanged on all fronts. Nothing to report.

Operations planned for the night of 24/25 November:

- 1.) E-boat and motor minesweeper patrols canceled because of the weather.
- 2.) Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to occupy the patrols lines as follows:
 - a) 3 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay,
 - b) 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun,
 - c) 4 naval ferry barges off Eltigen,
 - d) 2 naval ferry barges between Takil and Chongelek.

The barges mentioned in c) and d) will go to each other's assistance by agreed signal in the event of contact with the enemy.

If sailing is delayed by bad weather, the patrol lines are to be occupied at the first sign of an improvement. Otherwise the boats will be in position at dusk.

The naval ferry barges should abandon the patrol line if the weather becomes dangerous, or if the rough seas make it impossible for them to use their armament and also prevent the enemy from landing supplies.

The naval ferry barges took up their positions at dusk.

At 1945 the commander of the Eltigen group reported that he had lost contact with the other 3 naval ferry barges at 1845. The 2 naval ferry barges to the south are accordingly proceeding to Eltigen until the other boats are able to contact the commander again.

Western Black Sea:

At 2015 on 23 November, a submarine attacked the steamer BILKAN convoy 5 miles south of Varna. In swinging round to face the torpedo track head on, submarine chaser No. 103 rammed No. 309 which sank after transferring her crew. The convoy continued.

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Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea reported that tug ELENA, belonging to an Odessa-Sulina convoy, had been overdue since 0200. Four submarine chasers sailed from Sulina to search for her.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to send motor minesweeper RA 52 and RA 54 to Sevastopol immediately to make a check sweep of the position where SANTA FE exploded. Various signs indicate that she was not sunk by a torpedo. It now seems likely that the ship sank after striking a mine or as a result of an internal explosion.

Bearings obtained show that enemy submarines have been concentrating recently in the Tarkhankutzki area and that there are probably no submarines south of Cape Sarich at the moment. Hence it would seem advisable to divert at least some convoys via the southern route (SS 1). Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has been told to take this into account when planning convoy routes. He has also been instructed to time convoy sailings from Constantza so that the Crimean coast is reached at daybreak, and sailings from Sevastopol so that convoys are south of Cape Sarich at dusk.

Because of the ever increasing submarine menace, which must be overcome by systematic and thorough counter measures, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has been ordered to transfer immediately 1 submarine chaser from the naval transports Nos. 103, 104, 105 and 106 to the submarine chaser force directly under the command of Admiral, Black Sea. The ship will sail to Sevastopol immediately. The remaining 3 submarine chasers will be transferred to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, for escort duties.

While the importance of convoy protection is fully appreciated here, it is none the less true that effective results in the anti-submarine war can only be guaranteed by employing submarine chasers, which are designed exclusively for this purpose. There should be an equal distribution of forces for both these tasks. Next to submarine chasers, the most effective countermeasure against the concentrated submarine warfare which the enemy is now conducting against our Crimea convoy supplies in the Tarkhankutzki area would be the laying of a deep minefield in or near the convoy routes known to the enemy. The 100 UMB mines intended for this purpose were lost en route for Sevastopol in SANTA FE. As anti-submarine measures are very urgent, Group South has been requested to speed up delivery of the 200 UMB mines ordered in ASM Gkdos 7727.

Group South asked when the transfer of armed motor fishing vessels and naval transports from the Black Sea to the Aegean could be expected to take place. He was informed as follows:

- A. The date for the transfer of the 6 armed motor fishing vessels will be reported later.
- B. With reference to the order to transfer 2 submarine chasers (naval transports):

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The war against enemy submarines has hitherto been hampered by the shortage of submarine chasers. Enemy submarine activity is increasing and submarine chasers are urgently needed to prevent further shipping losses which would bring about a critical situation. Apart from this, fast naval transports would be indispensable for carrying large numbers of troops and we should not overlook the possibility of such a contingency arising in view of the present Crimea situation.

I therefore request that the order concerning the transfer of naval transports be canceled, or at least that no ships be transferred from 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla until 6 ships are sent as replacements.

Submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 returned to Sevastopol. Owing to rough sea (4 - 5), they were unable to check the place where the submarine incidents occurred on 22 and 23 November. The boats were also damaged and had suffered casualties in an air attack.

At 0300 the motor minesweepers Ri 51 and Ri 56 sailed from Sevastopol to search for mines in the area where S.A.M.L. FE was sunk.

Nothing to report from air reconnaissance. At 1135 U 18 arrived in Constantza. The boat has suffered serious damage from depth charges, e.g., several battery cells broken, Diesel foundations and starboard Diesel engine damaged by fire, shafting twisted etc. U-boats on operations were informed that destroyers "H" and "P" were probably at sea.

The U-boat very long wave, Black Sea cannot be used since an air raid on Berlin. U-boats can only be contacted when surfaced, which means only during the hours of darkness on short wave.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats made 8 ground mine check sweeps off Sevastopol harbor entrance. No mines were swept. Minesweeping was broken off owing to the weather.

No minesweeping planes operated in the Danube Delta because of fog.

Supply Traffic:

Apart from a submarine attack on the steamer DIJMAN convoys, nothing to report from convoys in the western Black Sea. No convoys ran off the south Crimea coast.

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Siniferopol Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance hindered by the weather. No night reconnaissance planes were able to take off. During the day reconnaissance was only flown over the eastern Black Sea where no enemy shipping was sighted.

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Main Naval D/F Station reported that 1 M.T.B. was detected off the southern east coast. No movements of surface of the forces were detected along the entire coast during the evening and night.

Submarines detected: 2 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as west and southwest of the Crimea. Four more submarines were detected in the general radio picture obtained of the operational area. One submarine was in the central Black Sea, probably home-ward bound.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Light winds, mainly W, local showers, otherwise cloudy, visibility 15 miles, sea 3 - 2.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a) The night passed quietly. The patrol lines in Kerch had no encounters with the enemy. No enemy convoys bringing supplies. The naval ferry barges off Kamish Durun were ineffectively shelled several times by shore batteries on Kessa Tuzla.

b) Land Situation:

Only patrol and shock troop activity on both sides during the night.

Both beachheads quiet during the day. Enemy entrenchments along the whole of the northern front. The dam across the Sivash from Sentyup to Russki has now been completed. Sudden burst of fire on Tarkhan. Otherwise quiet.

Operations planned for the night of 25/26 November:

- 1.) Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla will dispatch 4 naval ferry barges to occupy the patrol line off Kerch Bay and 2 to the patrol line off Kamish Durun. The naval ferry barges are to be in position at dusk and will enter Kamish Durun at daybreak.
- 2.) Three boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will occupy the patrol line off Eltigen and 2 boats Flotilla will be stationed between Cape Takil and Chongelek. The senior commanding officer in each flotilla will assume independent command of his flotilla.

Orders for sailing and entering port as for the night of 23/24 November. In the event of contact with the enemy, the E-boats and motor minesweepers will go to each other's assistance by agreed signal.

The patrol lines were occupied at dusk.

At 2150 naval ferry barge F 135 reported sinking a landing craft. Further actions took place in the course of the night in the patrol line off Kamish Durun. Details in tomorrow's War Diary.

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Western Black Sea:

At 1720 a submarine attack was made on the convoy sailing from Sulina to Sevastopol 20 miles south of Tarkhankutzki. The steamer VOLGA DON was hit in the stern by a torpedo and sank slowly by the stern. At 2125 3 tugs and 3 escort vessels sailed from Sevastopol for the scene of the incident.

Because of the very serious danger to convoys in the vicinity of the Crimea, especially from the air, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has received orders to arrange if possible that

- a) west - east convoys are off Sevastopol at daybreak or at least within range of our own fighters,
- b) east - west convoys sail from Sevastopol shortly before nightfall.

As submarine chasers Nos. 101 and 102 will be unable to put to sea for a few days as a result of enemy action, Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was ordered to send out 2 or 3 boats of 23rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla immediately to operate against submarines in Eupatoria Bay.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea has suggested that FZ-boats and (RI) motor-minesweepers should be placed under the command of Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Crimean Coast to act as anti-mine escorts ahead of convoys and to carry out check sweeps and other minesweeping duties. This proposal cannot be accepted as 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla must remain under the command of Admiral, Black Sea for operations along the entire Crimean coast. The transfer of boats for special duties which arise from time to time may be requested when the need arises.

In view of the danger to our own planes when flying low across the port of Ak Mechet, 1st Air Corps has been requested if possible not to fly within 5 km. radius of Ak Mechet. 1st Air Corps has replied that air crews have been informed and that considerably fewer planes will fly over the port in future. An order expressly forbidding planes to fly over the area could not be given.

The check sweep of the area where SINTI FE was sunk had to be canceled owing to the weather. As it is possible that she was sunk by a magnetic mine, 1st Air Corps has been requested to send out minesweeping planes to check the following areas:

- a) The scene of the explosion about 3 miles south of Cape Eupatoria to a radius of about 1,000 meters.
- b) Route green from Propovka to Nikolaiev to a width of about 800 meters.

In reply to an inquiry from Group South asking which gear had been used to check the spot where SINTI FE sank, it was stated that orders had been given for the scene of the sinking and route green from Propovka to Nikolaiev to be checked with propesa gear and towed loop gear. Up to now however it had not been possible to carry out the operation because of the weather. Commander, Naval Air was requested to have the area checked by minesweeping planes.

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In addition, Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to check the area where the SANTA FE sank and route green from Propovka to Nikolaiev with towed loop gear, as the depth of the water at the scene of the incident would have permitted the laying of non-contact mines.

At 1635 E-boat S 49 sailed from Constantza for Ivan Baba after completing her refit. The sailing of motor minesweeper R 196 from Theodosia to Sevastopol for an overhaul of the auxiliary motor, planned for today, had to be postponed for 24 hours because of the weather.

The enemy is aware of our concentration of U-boats south of Tuapse. Anti-submarine measures have been intensified and convoy escorts strengthened in this area. U 19 and U 20 are therefore taking up new positions in quarterline formation off Poti and to the northwest.

Object: To intercept enemy supplies leaving their base and to reconnoiter the waters off Poti. It is difficult to carry out air reconnaissance there and at the moment enemy merchant shipping is concentrated in the Poti area.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ-boats made 8 check sweeps for ground mines off Sevastopol harbor entrance without result. Minesweeping had to be abandoned because of the heavy swell.

Two motor minesweepers (RA) were unable to operate off Eupatoria because of the weather. FZ 11 checked the harbor entrance to Ak Mechet with towed loop gear and oropesa gear. Twelve sweeps were made without result. Two minesweeping planes operated over the Danube Delta. In 3 check sweeps no mines were swept.

Supply Traffic:

At 0950 24 bombers and ground attack planes escorted by 8 fighters attacked the BAYREUTH and "MT I" convoy west of Eupatoria. No casualties. At 1336 a second air attack was made on the same convoy by 6 dive-bombers and 2 ground attack planes. Again no casualties. Otherwise nothing to report from convoys in the western Black Sea.

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Sinferopol Enemy Situation:

Nothing was sighted by daylight reconnaissance over the central and southeastern Black Sea and over the Sea of Azov. No vessels of interest in ports on the Sea of Azov. No night reconnaissance was flown because of the weather.

According to an eye-witness, 2 coastal vessels, 3 tugs, 4 motor gunboats and about 10 pontoon barges were in the Gluchoi channel.

Reconnaissance of the Caucasus ports showed the following ships in harbor:

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Ghelenjik: 3 freighters each about 1,500 tons, 6 coastal vessels totaling 2,000 tons, 1 torpedo boat, 4 motor minesweepers and several boats; 1 torpedo boat and 1 minesweeper on a southeasterly course outside the harbor.

Novorossisk: 1 coastal vessel and several boats.

Anapa: 2 coastal vessels, 1 small coastal vessel, 2 M.T.B.s and about 10 motor landing craft.

There was no substantial change in the number of ships in the port of Ghelenjik compared with the last reconnaissance.

A reconnaissance plane, on which a bearing of 296° was obtained, reported a convoy on course 030°, speed 5 knots. The plane probably sighted the "Grafenau" towed convoy, proceeding from Sulina to Odessa, which was attacked at about 1230 by 14 enemy bombers and 2 fighters west of Bugaz.

Main Naval D/F Station reported that the radio picture of the east coast of the Black Sea revealed continued slight activity of vessels. Naval radio traffic which started late in the evening showed that the destroyers were still in their base. No movement of large ships was detected in the northeastern Black Sea.

Submarines detected: 2 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as the southwest coast of the Crimea. One of the submarines was homeward bound. Five more submarines are thought to be in the operational area.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea: SE winds, force 5 - 6, during squalls up to force 8, SW winds, force 5 - 4 in the afternoon, cloudy to overcast, rain, visibility 15 miles, sea 4 - 5. Yalta-Kerch: SE winds, later S; force 5, during squalls up to force 6, during the night SW winds, force 5 - 4, cloudy, local showers, visibility 12 miles, sea 3 - 4.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) Field Marshal von Kleist, Commanding General, Army Group A has expressed his acknowledgement to the naval forces engaged in Kerch for their courageous and successful performance in preventing enemy attempts to land on the Eltigen beachhead. 1st E-Boat Flotilla, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 1st and 3rd Landing Craft Flotillas have been informed of this recognition of their services, and the crews of all boats which have seen service in Kerch Strait since 1 November are to be informed of the Field Marshal's tribute.
- b) At 2150 on 25 November naval ferry barges on patrol off Kamish Burun sank an enemy landing craft.

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At 2250 6 more landing craft attempted to reach the coast. Naval ferry barge F 135 sank 2 boats at short range and forced the other to withdraw to the east.

F 135 suffered casualties from mortar fire. The commander of the force, Lieutenant Dittner, was killed. The boat was damaged above the waterline.

It is believed that the enemy was attempting either to make a surprise attack on Kamish Burun and destroy the naval ferry barges stationed there or to reach the Eltigen beachhead by passing our patrols to the north and proceeding under the coast.

At about 0030 motor minesweepers and E-boats off Eltigen sighted about 8 enemy vessels coming from Taman, probably making a preliminary reconnaissance. The enemy altered course to the north before coming within range of our guns. At 0230 motor minesweepers and E-boats shelled the enemy beachhead at Eltigen, each vessel firing 20 rounds. Our patrols prevented supplies from reaching the beachhead during the night and have thus once again carried out their duties successfully.

From 1300 to 1400, Kamish Burun was raided from the air and bombarded by land artillery. Slight damage was caused.

c) Land Situation:

No large-scale fighting at the beachheads or on the northern front.

- d) In O. Qu. 3712 Org., Group South approved the proposal to transfer to the Constantza area a maximum of 85 personnel of the Operations Staff, Admiral, Black Sea and a maximum of 50 personnel of Main Naval D/F Station, should it become necessary to evacuate the Crimea.

Operations planned for the night of 26/27 November:

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to send out the following patrols:

- a) 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay
- b) 3 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun
- c) 5 naval ferry barges off Eltigen.

Procedure as in previous orders. The enemy may try to evade our patrol line off Eltigen by passing to the south of it, and then attempt to reach the beachhead by proceeding close to the shore. Two boats should therefore be placed between Eltigen and Chongelek. In the event of contact with the enemy, the boats would quickly join the group off Eltigen.

The various patrol lines were occupied from 1630. At 2330 naval ferry barge F 329 sank off Eltigen after an explosion. The boat probably struck a mine. The crew was rescued.

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Western Black Sea:

By recapturing the area north of the Crimea, the enemy gained possession of airfields situated very near our convoy routes in the northwestern Black Sea. The airfield at Skadovsk, for instance, has bombers and torpedo planes which constitute a grave threat to our shipping and to the Crimea supply route in particular. Not one convoy in recent days has reached its destination without being attacked by enemy planes. The number of planes taking part in these attacks is increasing daily and we may expect further shipping losses which will be irreplaceable. The question of supplying the Crimea is already a very serious problem. Furthermore, we may expect to suffer losses in the course of enemy air raids on the transshipment ports of Sevastopol, Eupatoria, Ak Mechet and Odessa.

The attention of 4th Air Force has been drawn to the serious supply situation. The following measures are being requested to eliminate or at least reduce the increasing danger to the shipping life-lines to the Crimea:

- a) Raids on the Russian airfields north of the Crimea.
- b) The immediate transfer of sufficient fighters to protect all convoys in the northwestern Black Sea. In our opinion, the number of fighters at present available for escort duties is quite inadequate.

Group South has been informed of the serious threat from enemy air bases north of the Crimea to our convoy supplies, especially to the St. George-Sevastopol route. They have also been notified that orders have been given to Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, to send more convoys than usual via the present southern route. In order to shorten this route, it is intended to make a southwestern gap in the enemy danger area west of Cape Khersoneso as soon as the Crimea group of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla can be withdrawn from the Kerch operations.

It is also planned to lay a deep anti-submarine minefield between Cape Tarkhankutzki and Cape Eupatoria with the 58 UMB mines available in Constantza. Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea, has been instructed to submit a proposal as to where the minefield should be laid and then to carry out the operation after the approval of Admiral, Black Sea has been given. Depth setting will be minus 12 meters, average spacing 50 meters.

At about 1139 the steamer VOLGA DON sank approximately 15 miles west of Eupatoria after an attempt to take her in tow has proved unsuccessful.

Kerch Strait:

Several times during recent nights our naval ferry barges in patrol line off Kamish Burun were spotted by searchlights from Kessa Tuzla and shelled by an enemy battery without the intervention of our own batteries. They had to abandon their positions.

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Commander, Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 has therefore been ordered to give shore battery support to our patrols and to fire on enemy searchlights and batteries as soon as they start interfering with our patrols.

On moving to a new position, U 20 laid 1 EMS mine in air grid square 94114 as ordered and reported the fact (for bearings to be taken) along with the number of torpedoes still on board. U 19 also reported that no traffic and only slight air reconnaissance activity has been observed in the operational area since 16 November. The U-boat base has decided that U 18, which entered Constantza with serious damage caused by depth charges, is to go to Galatz for a refit as well as for repairs.

Minesweeping Activity:

Ak Mechet harbor entrance was checked by motor minesweepers (RM) with towed loop gear and otter gear. No mines were swept.

Supply Traffic:

Submarine chaser No. 2311 ran aground outside Bugaz when leaving for Odessa with "Grafenau" in tow. All attempts to refloat the submarine chaser have been unsuccessful up to now. While the attempts were going on, 14 bombers and 2 fighters dive-bombed the ships, coming in low over the land. Number of bombs were dropped and the ships were machine-gunned. Motor minesweeper RF 05 suffered a direct hit and sank. GRAFENAU was badly damaged. Seven men were killed and 4 wounded.

Only moderate convoy traffic because of the weather.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Night air reconnaissance was only flown along the Caucasus coast near the front and in our own waters south of Kerch Peninsula. No enemy shipping observed. In the course of daylight reconnaissance, no ships were sighted in the central or southeastern Black Sea. Eleven vessels were seen off Ilich and 2 vessels were observed entering the port. No shipping movements in Kerch Strait or the Sea of Azov apart from a few boats off Primorsko Akhtari.

No reconnaissance of ports along the Caucasus coast was possible because of the weather. A radio intercept report stated that the position of an unidentified vessel approximately 14 miles west-southwest of Poti was transmitted to a minesweeper.

Main Naval D/F Station reported slight activity of small vessels off the east coast at noon, including 1 minesweeper and 2 M.T.B.s between the central and southern parts and 1 M.T.B. off the northern part. One destroyer was detected in Novorossisk or Anapa or in that region. Three gunboats or motor launches were detected in the Sea of Azov. During the evening, general decrease in activity of small vessels along the entire east coast of the Black Sea. Compared with the situation at noon, there were 2 more M.T.B.s off the southern part of the east coast. The destroyer intercepted at noon was probably in the northwestern Black Sea base.

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No submarines were detected in the operational area. During the evening, 1 submarine was homeward bound west of Sukhum and another in an unidentified position, probably outward bound. Two submarines which were last intercepted in the operational area are thought to be still at sea. The whereabouts of 4 submarines are unknown.

It scarcely seems possible that all the submarines have returned to base unnoticed, as they have only been 4 - 10 days in the operational area. It looks as though they are maintaining radio silence or that the radio of one of the submarines is out of order.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea: SW - W winds, force 4, during squalls up to force 6, cloudy, showers abating, visibility 8 - 12 miles.

Yalta-Kerch: SW winds, force 4, during squalls up to force 6, cloudy, scattered showers, visibility 10 - 51 miles.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) The naval ferry barges on patrol off Eltigen had to return at 2330 on 26 November and the boats off Kamish Durun at 0100 because of SSW winds, force 6, sea 5. Nothing to report before boats returned. The enemy would have been unable to carry out a landing in such weather.

Naval ferry barges from the patrol line off Kerch Bay entered Kamish Durun at 0500. Nothing to report. The Eltigen beachhead was not bombarded as the boats had to return early. This operation is planned for the early hours of tomorrow. The loss of F 329 off Eltigen was probably caused by a drifting mine.

- b) In acknowledgement of the report submitted to 17th Army H.Q. concerning the heavy losses incurred by our naval ferry barges operating in Kerch and engaged on intercepting enemy supplies to the Eltigen beachhead, 17th Army H.Q. replied that the light naval forces in Kerch play a very important part in the defense of the Kerch Peninsula and that regardless of further losses full-scale operations must continue. From this we infer that repeated requests for the mopping-up of the Eltigen beachhead have not met with approval and that no such operation may be expected.

If we are to prevent the enemy from reinforcing the beachhead, our patrol lines will have to be occupied at their present strength. This means that we may expect further losses in naval ferry barges in the near future. Such losses could only be made good by the delivery of newly built naval ferry barges so that we would be in a position to meet the demands arising from the present situation in the Crimea. The completion of naval ferry barges Nos. 1027, 1029, 1033, 1041, 1103, 1111 and 1142 - 1144, which are now in building, must be given priority over all other work so that the craft can be made available for Admiral, Black Sea at the earliest opportunity.

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A relevant application has been sent to Group South.

c) Land Situation:

No action apart from artillery fire and patrol activity. The Eltigen beachhead is still receiving supplies from the air. On the northern front strong enemy assault troops were repulsed north of Karanki. At 0600 two enemy battalions launched an attack against the eastern part of the Tartar Ditch and were beaten off by gunfire.

The enemy breakthrough east of the citadel was mopped up by a counter-thrust. Ground was gained by our own forces in an attack in the Dumitrakhe sector. The enemy shelled Tarkhan.

Operations planned for the night of 27/28 November:

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to station the following patrols in Kerch:

- a) 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay,
- b) 3 naval ferry barges off Kamish Durun,
- c) 5 naval ferry barges off Eltigen.

If only 9 naval ferry barges can sail, the patrol line off Kamish Durun will be occupied by only 2 barges. Procedure as in previous orders.

Early on 28 November the naval ferry barges off Eltigen shelled the beachhead shortly before returning to base. Each boat fired 20 rounds from 7.5 cm. guns.

The naval ferry barges in each patrol line occupied their positions at dusk. Because of losses through enemy action, only 2 boats were able to occupy the patrol line off Kamish Durun.

Western Black Sea:

Submarine chaser No. 2311, which ran aground off Dugaz was refloated and towed to Odessa by submarine chaser SIEGFRIED.

The following addendum to ASM 7647 A I dated 24 November (Subject: Transfer of 2 naval transports and 6 armed motor fishing vessels) has been sent to Group South:

"Agree to transfer of 6 armed motor fishing vessels. Strongly advise against withdrawal of submarine chasers (naval transports) on account of the submarine menace in the Black Sea. The submarine threat can only be countered by systematic anti-submarine patrols carried out by submarine chasers fully equipped for this work. Naval transports are the only suitable type of ships for this work in winter. Therefore request that the proposal to withdraw naval transports be abandoned or at least that the 6 best submarine chasers in service in the Black Sea be allowed to remain there. It is emphasized that many losses have occurred recently through enemy submarine attacks."

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Commander, 1st E-boat Flotilla was ordered to return S 28 and S 45 to Constantza for overhaul of motors and fitting with cupolas. S 28 will sail from Ivan Baba as soon as weather permits. S 45 will meet S 28 off Balaklava. S 72 will be transferred from Balaklava to Ivan Baba at the same time so that 6 boats will be in service there.

Kerch Strait:

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to exchange naval ferry barges F 135 and F 521, which are out of action, for F 341 and F 574. On 28 November, weather permitting, F 341 and F 574 will sail from Theodosia to the patrol line in Kerch. Boats will put into Kemish Burun early on 29 November. Orders for the transfer of F 135 and F 521 to Theodosia will follow.

It has been observed that Russian boats plying between Chushka and Yeinkale flash three shorts on being picked up by their own searchlights. The searchlights then go out immediately.

Commanders, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla, 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 1st E-Boat Flotilla have been instructed to use the same procedure when intercepted by Russian searchlights.

U 18 is sailing from Constantza for Galatz via Sulina for a period in dock.

Minesweeping Activity:

- a) Minesweeping planes checked Eupatoria Bay for mines. The area where SANTA FE sank was checked four times in 100 meter wide strips covering 1,000 meters to the south, but no mines were swept.

The area covered by the beams from Eupatoria lighthouse was checked twice to points 40 and 41, but no mines were swept there either.

- b) FZ-boats carried out 3 check sweeps for ground mines off Sevastopol harbor entrance. At 1000 the operation was broken off owing to the weather.
- c) Three minesweeping planes carried out 5 check sweeps in the waters off the Danube. No mines were swept.

Supply Traffic:

All convoys were postponed because of the weather.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Two planes on night reconnaissance off the west coast of the Caucasus, south of the Crimea and over Kerch Peninsula intercepted no enemy shipping traffic. Nothing was sighted by daylight reconnaissance in the central and southeastern Black Sea. The following ships were seen in the Taman harbors and in Anapa:

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Anapa: 5 motor minesweepers, 1 M.T.B., 2 coastal vessels, each 150 tons, and 8 motor landing craft.

Kuban estuary: 4 boats taken to be motor gunboats.

Senaya Bay (Partly obscured by cloud): 10 motor landing craft and 30 boats.

Aerial photographic reconnaissance of part of Yeisk showed 1 ferry barge, 9 small armed vessels, 10 motor landing craft and 25 boats, some beached. Nothing could be distinguished in the photographs of Anapa.

Main Naval D/F Station, Eupatoria reported that at noon 2 M.T.B.s and a destroyer were off the northern part of the east coast. 3 M.T.B.s and 3 motor gunboats were intercepted off the southern part. Probably there was 1 destroyer at sea. Activity of small vessels continued during the evening between the central and northern parts of the east coast. Two more M.T.B.s were intercepted. The destroyer detected at noon was still in the same area. No change off the southern part of the east coast compared with the situation at noon.

Submarines detected: Only 2 in the northwestern Black Sea, one homeward bound and one outward bound.

Reports from Main D/F Station show that between 23 and 25 November, Russian submarine activity reached a maximum with 11 submarines detected in the operational area or outward and homeward bound. Enemy submarine activity returned to normal in the last few days with an average of 7 submarines at sea.

The 11 submarines detected at sea about 5 days ago were probably on a special full-strength operation west of the Crimea as a result of the situation there. Probably the enemy was expecting the withdrawal of troops by sea or the transportation of strong reinforcements to the Crimea, and was intent on stopping this with everything in his power.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

W winds, force 3 - 4, cloudy, visibility 12 miles, sea 3 - 2, high swell.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

a) Naval ferry barges from the patrol line in Kerch Strait put into Kamish Burun at 0500. No enemy convoys were seen, but it was observed that the Eltigen beachhead was receiving supplies from the air. At 0340 the naval ferry barges bombarded the beachhead with 100 rounds from 7.5 cm. guns. Because of dust forming over the target they were unable to observe what hits had been scored. It is thought that some houses were hit.

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At 1125 an air raid was carried out on Kamish Durun, in the course of which naval ferry barge F 594 suffered several direct hits. Her ammunition exploded and she caught fire and is now a total loss. Two other naval ferry barges were slightly damaged. No casualties among the crews.

- b) Strong enemy artillery activity on the northern front in the Arabatz sector. The enemy was busy constructing positions and building a dam on both sides of Russki Island. Our own positions were improved near Hill 17.6 in the sector west of Ajshkadan. Enemy attacks were repulsed.

Since 1300 an enemy attack supported by tanks and ground attack planes has been under way against the corner of our breakthrough south of Perekop. Concentrations north of the Tartar Ditch were broken up by our artillery.

Nothing to report from the beachhead.

c) Anti-Partisan Measures:

The enemy is making determined attempts to break the resistance of German and Rumanian troops in the Crimea with the aid of organized partisan forces behind the front. Commanding General, 17th Army H.Q. has therefore issued strict orders in a special Army Communique dated 24 November that in future far severe measures are to be taken against partisans. He has for instance authorized German and Rumanian generals and divisional commanders to issue orders that villages and homesteads which have obviously served as secret hiding places or concentration points for bandits with the consent of some of the inhabitants are to be completely destroyed. In order to deprive partisans in the Jaila Mountains of supplies, orders have been given to remove to the divisional supply camps all cattle and foodstuffs south of the Sevastopol-Bekhchisarai-Simferopol-Karasubazar-Theodosia road.

By order of the Commanding General, immediate measures are to be taken to intensify the war against partisans.

Operations planned for the night of 28/29 November:

- 1.) Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla will occupy the following patrol lines:
 - a) 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay
 - b) 3 naval ferry barges off Kamish Durun.
- 2.) Three boats of 1st E-Boat Flotilla and 3 boats of 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will occupy patrol lines off Eltigen and between Chongolek and Cape Takil. The senior commanding officer will assume command of the force.

The patrol lines were occupied from dusk.

At 2200 the motor minesweepers and E-boats had to abandon their positions because of the weather (ENE winds, force 5 - 6) and return to base. The boats would have been unable to fire their guns.

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Western Black Sea:

The raid on the airfield at Skadovsk requested by Admiral, Black Sea was carried out today by 23 planes, after I had submitted a further request to Commanding General, 4th Air Force and Commanding General, 1st Air Corps. An accurate bombing attack was made on 15 fighters and 20 bombers lying on the airfield. Explosions and fires were observed.

At 1430 XINTEM and 3 vessels of 3rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla sailed from Sevastopol for an anti-submarine patrol in the Sevastopol-Tarkhankutzki-Eupatoria area. The spot where the SANTEM explosion occurred was checked by minesweeping planes, but no mines were found.

Motor minesweepers (Ri) swept route Green from point 39 to 43 with oropesa gear to a width of 300 meters. No mines were swept.

At 1500 4 FZ-boats arrived in Eupatoria from Sevastopol for mine-sweeping duties in Eupatoria Bay. Motor minesweeper R 216, which left Sevastopol for Theodosia at 1900 after completing a period in dock and which is to take part in the Kerch operations, returned to Sevastopol at 2050 because of bad weather. At 1430 S 72 will sail from Balaklava for Ivan Daba, E.T.A. 1920.

Sailing of S 28 and S 45 to Constantza for a period in dock was postponed. The boats encountered bad weather after leaving Ivan Daba and Balaklava and had to return to Balaklava at 2300.

Kerch Strait:

Naval Shore Commander, Caucasus received orders for naval ferry barges F 341 and F 574 to sail at 1030 to the patrol line between Cape Takil and Chongelek. The boats will enter Kanish Durun at daylight on 30 November. Sailing had been delayed for a day by the weather. The boats have been informed of the situation and of their duties. Command will be assumed by the commander of the group already in Kerch Strait.

At 1300 U 9 will sail from Constantza for the operational area via the northern route, having completed her period in dock.

At 1600 U 18 arrived in Galatz for a refit.

Minesweeping Activity:

FZ 11 checked ik Mechet harbor entrance with oropesa gear and towed loop gear. Ten checks were made with towed loop gear without any mines being swept.

For further minesweeping activity, see "Western Black Sea" (Scene of SANTEM explosion).

Supply Traffic:

After an improvement in the weather, convoys were again able to sail in the western Black Sea and off the south Crimea coast.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

Night air reconnaissance over the sea south of the Crimea and Kerch Peninsula. No enemy shipping was observed. Three planes carried out daylight reconnaissance over the western, central and south-southeastern Black Sea. About 25 miles southeast of Ghelenjik, they intercepted a small vessel, type so far unidentified.

At about 0620, U 20 reported a tanker of about 1,500 tons, 4 motor gunboats and 1 torpedo boat (or destroyer) on northwesterly course approximately 45 miles southwest of Cape Pitsunka.

A radio intercept report stated that a destroyer and a minesweeper were informed of the position of an unidentified vessel which had been located 33 miles southwest of Tuapse.

Main Naval D/F Station reported continuation of slight activity of small vessels continued the entire east coast. Two M.I.B.s were intercepted off the northern part. A destroyer and a minesweeper were located between the central and southern parts approaching from the southeastern Black Sea, probably steering a northwesterly course for Tuapse. A gunboat was detected in the same area. A destroyer was intercepted off the northern part of the east coast in Ghelenjik or Novorossisk.

Submarines detected: 1 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as west and southwest of the Crimea and 6 at sea, of which 4 were thought to be in the operational area and probably 1 outward and 1 homeward bound. The position of the other two boats was not known.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

Western Black Sea: SW winds, backing to S in the afternoon, force 3 - 4, fair, visibility 20 miles, sea 2.

Yalta-Kerch: N winds, veering during the day to NW, force 4, cloudy, visibility 6 - 10 miles, sea 2.

Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) The naval ferry barcos in patrol line off Kerch and Kamish Burun had to return to port at 2300 last night because of the gale NNE winds, force 7. They did not sight anything.

The enemy would have been unable to land in such weather.

- b) Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 stated that no supplies were dropped in the southern beachhead last night. At about 1415, 12 bombers with very strong fighter escort attacked 2 batteries and infantry positions south of the beachhead. The batteries were not damaged.

c) Land Situation:

Early morning: All quiet at the beachheads.

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Continuous enemy reinforcements have been moving across the Sivash and since dusk there has been continuous heavy artillery fire from 15 batteries against the Perokop front. The enemy is probably about to attack again. Lively patrol activity on both sides during the night. Several local attacks were repulsed on the northern front. No large-scale fighting during the day and the evening on any front, only shelling.

Operations planned for the night of 29/30 November:

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to occupy the following patrol lines:

- a) 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay and 2 off Kamish Burun
- b) 4 naval ferry barges off Eltigen
- c) The 2 naval ferry barges which sailed from Theodosia at 1230 will reach the patrol line south of Eltigen at about 1900.

The naval ferry barges in b) will again shell the Eltigen beachhead, each craft firing 20 rounds from 7.5 cm. guns early on 30 November before returning to port.

The naval ferry barges mentioned in a) and b) occupied their patrol lines at dusk. The 2 naval ferry barges south of Eltigen reached the patrol line at 2030.

Western Black Sea:

Naval Liaison Staff, Bucharest reported that the Rumanian Navy had urgently requested submarine chasers and fighters to patrol the convoy routes to the Crimea because of the serious shipping losses. The following reply was sent to Naval Liaison Staff, Bucharest:

"Fully agree with opinion of Rumanian Navy and request that you inform them that energetic anti-submarine measures are being taken. As far as weather conditions permit there will be a continuous anti-submarine patrol in the Cape Tarkhan area. In a conference held with Commanding General, 4th Air Force, it was agreed that every effort would be made by the Air Force to protect supplies going to the Crimea and to keep shipping losses down to a minimum. Enemy airfields north of the Crimea will be raided continuously, and all convoys sailing during the day to or from the Crimea will be provided with fighter escort.

To make submarine operations more difficult for the enemy, convoys will sail in turn via the northern route, through the northwestern minefield gap, and via the southern route."

In reply to an inquiry from Group South concerning the condition of armed motor fishing vessels and naval transports, it was reported that the naval transports were not yet ready for service as they had no minesweeping gear and the boilers were defective, but that nine of the armed motor fishing vessels were now ready for service.

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XANTEN and 3 submarine chasers are on anti-submarine patrol south of Tarkhankutzki.

Because of engine failure submarine chaser No. 302 had to be towed to Sevastopol by No. 314.

Commander, 30th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was ordered to check the new approach route to Eupatoria from Green 40 A with cropesa gear and towed loop gear to a width of 600 meters. Motor minesweepers (M) and FZ-boats will sail from Eupatoria at 0500 to continue the check sweep.

The sailing of E-boats S 28, S 45 and S 49 from Balaklava to Constanza for refit had to be postponed again because of the weather. The boats had already left at 2100 and were forced to return at 2330.

South Coast Crimea:

At 2100 motor minesweeper R 216 will sail from Sevastopol for Theodosia, having completed her dockyard period.

Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to send naval ferry barges F 135 and F 521, which were out of action, from Kamish Durun to Theodosia at 1600. Coastal authorities will be informed.

Radiogram 0125 from U 19:

- 1.) 2020 27 November misfire submarine heading west air grid square 13583.
- 2.) 0100 29 November, set course for home via southern route.
- 3.) Position air grid square 1372, hitherto unobserved, 1 torpedo, 5 cbm.
- 4.) Probably short circuit in rotor armature port Diesel engine.

Because of anticipatory maneuvers and convoy shadowing, the boat consumed more fuel than was calculated by command, hence the surprisingly early return.

At 0900 U 20 reported:

"At 0602 in air grid square 9341 fired an unsuccessful fan-of-two torpedoes at a tanker of 1,500 tons, course northwest. Depth setting 4 meters, enemy speed 9 knots, angle on the bow 90° (range 2,500 meters), magnetic firing. Escort: 1 torpedo boat, 4 submarine chasers. Fuel left 8.5 cbm.

A striking fact about this report is the convoy's distance from the coast: 45 miles southwest of Cape Pitsunda. Enemy convoys are steering arbitrary courses between the coastline and areas a considerable distance out to sea. U 20 was ordered to try to shadow the convoy. Air reconnaissance has been informed but cannot sight anything because of poor visibility. A radio intercept report stated that the convoy must have been near Tuapse at about 1700.

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Minesweeping Activity:

Minesweeping was continued in Eupatoria Bay by motor minesweepers (RM), FZ-boats and minesweeping planes. No mines swept. One minesweeping plane checked the sea off the Danube twice. No mines detected.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys in the western Black Sea ran as scheduled without incident.

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Simferopol Enemy Situation:

With the exception of one of our U-boats near Tuapse, nothing was detected by night reconnaissance in the coastal waters from the Crimea along the Caucasus coast to Cape Pitsunda. Five planes on daylight reconnaissance over the Black Sea did not sight any enemy ships.

At 0840 a passenger boat of 3,500 tons was sighted off the eastern Turkish coast about 12 miles northwest of Unye, course east.

1st Air Corps reported: The following radiogram was intercepted in a plain language radiogram:

"Dager 14" (observation post of Russian Black Sea air Force): "You are to receive radiogram from Canada I (control station at the southern beachhead). It would not be a bad idea for all to attack the ferries in the Eltigen area and Kamish Burun during the early hours, they are always there".

Reports from Main Naval D/F Station stated that 2 M.T.B.s were detected at noon off the northern east coast and 1 destroyer in port or in the Ghelenjik-Anapa area. Two minesweepers were detected off the central part of the east coast, course southeast, probably coming from Tuapse. One destroyer probably still in Tuapse. One M.T.B. was detected off the southern east coast.

No further activity of surface forces was detected off the east coast during the evening and night. Two motor launches or gunboats were at sea in the Sea of Azov.

Submarines detected: 4 in the northwestern Black Sea as far as south and southwest of the Crimea and 2 more thought to be in the operational area. Two submarines were at sea between the central part of the east coast and southeastern Black Sea and 3 more were at sea in unidentified positions.

Own Situation:

Weather forecast:

West coast Crimea: SW - W winds, force 3 - 4, mainly fair, visibility 15 miles, sea 2. Yalta - Kerch: S - SW winds, force 5 - 4 in the afternoon, cloudy, visibility 15 miles, sea 3 - 2.

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Crimea and Kerch Strait:

- a) Patrols in Kerch Strait did not contact enemy forces. The 4 naval ferry barges off Eltigen carried out routine bombardment of the beachhead at daybreak, each boat firing 20 rounds of 7.5 cm. shells.

On returning to Kamish Burun from the patrol line in the southern part of Kerch naval ferry barges F 341 and F 574 ran aground at 0430 off the northwestern point of Kessa Tuszla. Attempts to salvage the boats were immediately made but they had to be abandoned at 0700 owing to heavy artillery fire and because it was only possible to approach to within 800 meters of the boats owing to the shallowness of the water. Orders were therefore given for the ferry barges to be blown up. The engines were destroyed together with the confidential books.

An attempt to rescue the crew by assault craft failed, as the boats capsized through overloading on going alongside the naval ferry barges. The commander of the group, Lieutenant (S.G.) Bastians, and 4 men lost their lives in the rescue attempt. The men who had taken to the lifeboats drifted off to the north in SE winds, force 5. Naval ferry barges which left Kamish Burun to search for survivors found nothing. At about 0830 explosions were observed aboard F 341 and in F 574. Probably scuttling. Five men from the crews were washed ashore in Kerch Bay in a rubber dinghy. The fate of the rest is not yet known for certain, the majority was presumably taken prisoner by the Russians. At 1517 Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 which was ordered to shell the naval ferry barges which had run aground, reported that there were still men aboard one of the boats as flares were seen during cautious shelling. F 472 immediately lowered a dinghy with 2 men to go to their rescue, but the dinghy did not return.

The loss of the 2 naval ferry barges must be put down to extreme difficulties in navigation in Kerch, where there are no navigation lights. It was a dark night and SW winds, force 5 cause a strong drift.

The number of naval ferry barges lost in the blockade of the Eltigen beachhead has thus risen to eight. As losses are incurred every day, we must expect that the remaining 5 naval ferry barges stationed in Kerch Strait will be out of action within a few days.

If the Eltigen beachhead is not mopped up by the Army before this situation arises, we shall have to transfer naval ferry barges from the western Black Sea to carry out patrol duties at the expense of the convoy supplies to the Crimea.

In the course of an air raid on Kamish Burun, naval ferry barge F 306 suffered 2 direct hits and is badly damaged, while F 304, although only slightly damaged, is also out of action.

b) Land Situation:

Early morning: On the northern front several enemy attacks in company strength against Hill 17.6 were repulsed during the night. Otherwise quiet. The enemy is receiving continuous reinforcements north of Shchemnovka.

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Enemy planes bombed and machine-gunned the main defense line and battery positions near Eltigen.

Nothing to report from the Baksy beachhead.

Evening: On the northern front shelling by both sides, concentrating especially on the Perchop sector, where enemy activity is increasing. Work on the dam across the Sivash continuing.

Only shelling of the beachheads. Lively enemy air activity over the Eltigen front and Kamish Burun, transporting supplies and raiding.

Operations planned for the night of 30 November/1 December:

Probably no operations by motor minesweeper and E-boats will be possible because of the weather. It will therefore be necessary to send out naval ferry barges from Kamish Burun again. Commander, 1st Landing Craft Flotilla was ordered to station the following patrols:

- a) 2 naval ferry barges off Kerch Bay
- b) 2 naval ferry barges off Kamish Burun
- c) 4 naval ferry barges off Eltigen.

It is planned to place an additional patrol line of 3 E-boats between Takil and Chongelek by special order as soon as weather conditions improve.

In the course of an air raid on Kamish Burun, 3 naval ferry barges were put out of action, so that there are now only 5 boats still available. The patrol line off Kamish Burun will be occupied by 2 barges and the line off Eltigen by 3. There will be no patrols for Kerch Bay. It will not be possible to send out the E-boats as planned, as weather conditions have not improved.

Western Black Sea:

Submarine chasers could not sail for anti-submarine patrols in the Tarkhankutzki-Apatoria area because of the weather.

Commander, Convoys and Escorts, Black Sea was informed that submarine chaser No. 103 will be attached to 1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla (Crimea) after completing boiler repairs in Sevastopol. The ship will come under the command of Admiral, Black Sea.

Commander, 1st E-Boat Flotilla reported that E-boats S 28, S 45, and S 49 are still unable to sail to Constantza because of the weather.

South Coast Crimea:

At 0215 naval ferry barges F 135 and F 521, which are out of action, arrived in Theodosia from Kamish Burun.

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U 20 reported her new position by short signal as air grid square 9440, reached by shadowing the tanker convoy at which she unsuccessfully fired 2 torpedoes on 29 November. The boat has been ordered to stand on and off in this latitude across the convoy routes and to patrol to the southeast at 0000 on 1 December with U 9 which is due to arrive shortly.

The following order was issued in connection with this operation:

U 9 and U 20 will patrol at 0000 on 1 December from air grid square 8441 lower left corner to 9417 upper left corner, course southeast, one engine slow speed. Quarterline formation off Poti and to the northwest to intercept shipping which has put out.

Enemy Air Activity:

At 1130 6 Russian bombers twice bombed and machine-gunned Ochakov. No damage to naval installations. The Rumanians suffered 2 dead and 3 wounded. Three Germans were also wounded. At 1520 17 bombers carried out another attack in 3 waves. About 100 bombs were dropped. No casualties were suffered. The north jetty was damaged by a direct hit. On assault boat and 1 Siebel ferry were lost.

Minesweeping Activity:

Minesweeping planes continued sweeping off Eupatoria. One plane was shot down while sweeping in the Dnieper estuary. Motor minesweepers (RA) and FZ-boats could not operate off Eupatoria because of rough seas.

Supply Traffic:

Convoys in the western Black Sea ran without incident.

(Signed) Brinkmann

Summary for November

A. Enemy operations:

1. Submarine attacks (with torpedoes): 12
2. Attacks by surface forces: None
3. Air raids:
 - a) On naval shore installations and ports: 42 attacks (112 planes)
 - b) On vessels: 27 attacks (151 planes)
(Information incomplete as the number of planes and attacks is not always reported.)
4. Planes shot down:
 - a) By naval shore batteries: 7, probably 3 more.
 - b) By ship's anti-aircraft guns: 6

B. Own operations:

1. Q-ships and submarine chasers: 1 submarine sunk and 2 damaged in 66 days' operations with 29 boats.

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2. Motor minesweepers: 3 motor gunboats, 5 motor landing craft, 2 M.T.B.s, 1 tug and 2 vessels sunk and 5 more badly damaged in 14 days' operations with 60 boats.
3. E-boats: 1 motor gunboat, 2 motor landing craft and 1 lighter sunk and 1 motor landing craft damaged in 17 day's operations with 60 boats.
4. Naval ferry barges: 2 motor gunboats and 7 motor landing craft sunk and 6 motor gunboats, 3 motor landing craft and 1 lighter badly damaged in 29 days' operations with 245 barges.
5. U-boats: 2 freighters totaling 3,500 G.R.T. sunk in 89 days' operations with 6 U-boats.

C. Own losses:

1. Total losses:
 - a) Naval forces:
 - By bombs: 2 naval ferry barges and 2 harbor defense vessels.
 - torpedoes: 1 naval ferry barge.
 - mines: 1 naval ferry barge.
 - gunfire: 2 naval ferry barges.
 - gales etc: 5 naval ferry barges and 1 armed fishing vessel.
 - b) Merchant: 3 steamers totaling 11,065 G.R.T., torpedoed by submarines.
2. Damaged:
 - a) Naval forces:
 - by bombs and machine-guns: 14 naval ferry barges and 3 motor minesweepers.
 - b) Merchant: None.

D. Mines:

1. Swept or destroyed by gunfire: 3 standard mines and 4 moored mines.
2. 10 minefields laid with: 140 standard mines, 906 moored mines and 200 explosive floats, type C.

E. Supply Traffic:

1. Naval vessels escorted: 9
2. Merchant:
 - a) in convoy: 157 vessels totaling 176,455 G.R.T.
 - b) unescorted: 5 vessels totaling 1,136 G.R.T.
 - c) 141 naval ferry barges totaling 14,100 G.R.T.

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Summary for November

During November, the situation changed completely in the command of Admiral, Black Sea as a result of the loss of territory north of the Crimea and the enemy landings on Kerch Peninsula. The Crimea, the corner stone of the German Eastern Front, is now being attacked by the Russians directly from the north and from the east, and supplies can only be brought by sea, and reinforcements only by sea and air.

The situation presented two principal tasks for Admiral, Black Sea:

- 1.) The employment of naval forces at sea and marines ashore in the defense of the Crimea.
- 2.) The supplying of the Crimea by sea.

Re 1.): After the enemy had succeeded in crossing Kerch Strait at two points, the Navy was presented with the task of preventing supplies from reaching the beachheads at night. In the north, this was only possible during the first few days after the crossing. Once the enemy had placed heavy batteries and powerful searchlights on Kossa Chushka our naval forces could no longer operate in the northern entrance, which is only 5,000 meters wide. As the enemy extended their beachhead from Cape Chroni to Yenikale after a few days, there would anyway have been no point in carrying on with operations of this kind, as they were now able to bring up supplies during the day beyond the range of our guns. The only thing left to do was to disrupt ferry traffic by laying minefields and causing the enemy as many losses as possible. All available naval ferry barges were engaged on this minelaying operation.

As all the forces of 17th Army H.Q. had to be engaged in blockading the beachhead in the northern part of Kerch, it was of the utmost importance to prevent supplies from reaching the southern beachhead by Eltigen. If the enemy had succeeded in strengthening and enlarging this beachhead, the main supply roads to Kerch would have been cut, and Kerch, and hence Kerch Peninsula, could not have been held. The enemy was only able to send supplies to the Eltigen beachhead during the hours of darkness, as he would have been effectively shelled by our own shore batteries in daylight. It was therefore the Navy's duty to prevent supplies arriving by night. Since 1 November, everything has been done to ensure the success of this operation. We practically succeeded in blockading the beachhead, so that the Russians were forced to use air transports every day for bringing their supplies. They were thus not in a position to launch offensive operations from the beachhead or to tie down our forces.

In the course of the blockade of this beachhead, our naval ferry barges, motor minesweepers and E-boats had numerous engagements with Russian naval forces which tried to break through our patrol lines. During these engagements the following enemy boats were sunk:

- 6 motor gunboats
- 2 M.T.B.s
- 14 landing craft
- 1 tug
- 1 lighter
- 2 small vessels

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Total: 26 boats

The following enemy boats were damaged:

10 motor gunboats
2 M.T.B.s
5 landing craft
1 lighter.

On the other hand, our forces operating in Kerch Strait from 1 to 30 November including

31 Naval ferry barges in 245 operations in 29 days
6 motor minesweepers in 50 operations in 14 days
5 E-boats in 60 operations in 17 days

i.e. a total of 42 vessels in 355 operations

suffered heavy losses, mainly through air raids on the naval ferry barge base at Kamish Burun.

8 naval ferry barges became a total loss, while
14 naval ferry barges and
3 motor minesweepers were damaged.

In view of the disposition of forces and the demands made by other operations within the command of Admiral, Black Sea, we cannot go on suffering such losses, and eventually the blockade will have to be abandoned because of the shortage of forces. Several times urgent requests were sent to 17th Army H.Q. to strike while the enemy was embarrassed by supply difficulties and mop up the beachhead.

Realizing the situation and appreciating that it will be impossible to prevent the enemy from digging-in on the beachhead in the long run, Commanding General, 17th Army H.Q. has promised to carry out the mopping-up operation at the beginning of December.

The batteries of Naval Gunnery Detachment 613 inflicted losses on the enemy in Kerch by shelling the Eltigen beachhead and enemy batteries on Kossa Chushka and Kossa Tuszla and near Cape Tuszla. Shipping off the coast between Chelenjik Rog and Cape Tuszla was also shelled.

Land operations on the northern front were supported by naval batteries, and guns were transferred to the Army. Additional support was given to the Army by withdrawing some 1,800 men from marine units to form infantry reserves.

U-boats were also engaged in the Crimea operations as a defense against the larger landing operations which, according to the statements of agents and prisoners, were due to follow. The boats were principally stationed along the northwestern Caucasus coast in deep quarterline formation in order to report the approach of enemy forces in time and to attack them before they reached the coast. At the same time the U-boats were to strike at supplies going to Tuapse, which would probably be the main jumping-off base for large-scale landing operations. U-boats sank a freighter of 1,500 G.R.T. and a tanker of 2,000 G.R.T.

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The effective blockade of the Eltigen beachhead by our naval forces will probably not be without effect on the enemy's plans for further landings. Despite the short supply route and favorable weather conditions, the enemy was unable to transport the necessary supplies across the sea. He would have to expect even more difficulties on attempting to land at places even further away from his supply bases. Therefore indirect but important results were achieved by the naval ferry barges, motor minesweeper and E-boat operations off Eltigen.

Re 2.): Army Group A requested an average delivery of 1,500 tons of supplies a day to the Crimea, now entirely dependent on the sea route. The same amount was to be brought back from the Crimea.

The total of 24,255 tons of supplies delivered to the Crimea was considerably less than the amount requested. The reason for this, apart from the exceptionally bad weather, was the increased activity of Russian submarines and planes against our convoys in northwestern Black Sea. The enemy recognized the vital importance of our convoy supply route across the sea for the defense of the Crimea and concentrated their submarines in the Tarkhankutzki area, where as many as 8 submarines were detected at a time. Up to now owing to lack of proper submarine chasers and specially trained personnel we have not been successful in overcoming the submarine menace. It is hoped to obtain favorable results by forming submarine chaser forces made up of converted naval transports and armed motor fishing vessels and by carrying out systematic anti-submarine patrols in the most dangerous areas. Intensified anti-submarine operations started in the middle of November. In November one submarine was sunk and it is fairly certain that 2 more were damaged. As a further measure, orders have been given for a deep minefield to be laid between Cape Tarkhan and Eupatoria. Plans have also been made for a similar minefield west and south of Tarkhankutzki to be laid as soon as the necessary mines are available.

Next to submarines, enemy planes constitute an ever-growing threat to our convoys. In recapturing the area north of the Crimea the enemy came in possession of air bases in the immediate vicinity of our convoy routes and has gained the supremacy of the northwestern Black Sea with his bombers, fighters and ground attack planes. By continuous air reconnaissance the enemy is informed of all our convoy movements. He is thus in a position to attack our convoys simultaneously with strong formations of bombers, torpedo planes and fighters when the movement is favorable. To strike at the root of this danger, which constitutes a serious threat to the Crimea supplies, 4th Air Force was requested to raid the enemy air bases north of the Crimea. So far, the airfield near Skadovsk which serves as a base for long-range bombers and torpedo planes has been successfully attacked twice.

In the course of systematic enemy submarine and air attacks on our convoys during November the following ships were lost:

Steamer VOLGA DON	1,965 tons
Steamer SANTA FE	4,500 tons
steamer THEODERICH	5,600 tons
4 naval ferry barges.	

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The enemy will increase their efforts to disrupt our supplies to the Crimea and we must expect further shipping losses which cannot be made good. Hence, it will not be possible to reach the target figure of 45,000 tons of supplies per month, which could now only be reached under favorable conditions and in continuously good weather. In the long run the only means of supplying the Crimea will be over the land route via Perekop.

General Crimea Situation:

At present we may assume that the front at the beachhead north of Kerch will be held and according to statements from 17th Army H.Q. the Eitigen beachhead is to be mopped up.

On the northern front the enemy has made no major advance during the past few weeks after his initial successes; but we must expect that they will bring up strong reinforcements to the beachhead south of the Sivash once the dam across the Sivash has been completed, and at the moment we do not have sufficient means at our disposal to meet this emergency.

The Crimea situation will become critical when the Sivash freezes over. When that occurs, the short fronts on the isthmuses will be extended to over 120 km. in length and we have no troops available for occupying such an area.

Because of this situation, quite apart from the necessity of reopening the land route for supplying the Crimea, we shall be compelled to reoccupy the area north of the Crimea. Otherwise it is very doubtful whether we shall be able to hold out in the Crimea during the 3 months when the Sivash is frozen.

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Naval Group South
Serial No Op 9183 Gkdos.

Appendix I

EXTRACT FROM WAR DIARY, ADMIRAL BLACK SEA,

1 - 15 January 1944

To: Naval High Command, Naval Staff, Operations Division

Copy to: Admiral, Black Sea

The following is submitted as an appendix to the War Diary of Admiral, Black Sea 16 - 30 November 1943:

1. Ref. "Own Situation" 21 November

After the bombing and machine-gunning of the car belonging to the Commanding Admiral, which was undoubtedly recognized by the enemy, would it not in future be advisable for cars of high ranking officers to proceed without pennant in places where there is a danger of air raids?

2. Ref. "Western Black Sea" 24 November

The formation of submarine chaser forces and the proposed nature of their operations has already been taken into consideration in the building program for submarine chasers (armed fishing vessels and naval transports). However, up to now it has been impossible to carry out the plans because of the shortage of vessels.

3. Ref. "Western Black Sea" 26 November

In order to increase the efficiency of fighter protection, the restrictions on the use of Rumanian fighters have been lifted. These planes are again available for fighter escort operations. Already enemy airfields have been attacked with good results.

For Naval Group Command, South
Chief of Staff

(Signature)

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