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WAR DIARY

German Naval Staff Operations Division

PART A VOLUME 55

DECLASSIFIED BY DOD MEMO OF 3 MAY 1973, 5237
DECLASSIFICATION OF WWII RECORDS

MARCH 1944

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WAR DIARY OF NAVAL STAFF

(Operations Division)

PART A

March 1944

Chief, Naval Staff:	Admiral of the Fleet Dönitz
Chief of Staff, Naval Staff:	Vice Admiral Meisel
Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff:	Rear Admiral Wagner

Volume 55

begun:	1 March 1944
closed:	31 March 1944

REPRODUCED FOR THE USE OF THE
JOURNALIZATION OF WII RECORDS



FOREWORD

1. This volume entitled War Diary of the German Naval Staff, Operations Division, Part A, is Volume 55 covering March 1944. Other volumes will follow shortly.
2. The War Diaries, Part A, are important because they contain a day by day summary of the information available to the German Naval Staff and the decisions reached on the basis thereof. Together with Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1945, which have been published, the War Diaries should provide valuable material for the study of naval problems arising from total war. The War Diary, Part A, is also a useful index to the German Naval Archives of World War II; references may be found in the Classified Operational Branch of Naval History Division (Op-29).
3. Due to the cost of publication, only a limited number of copies could be made . If any recipient of this War Diary does not need to retain it, it is requested that it be returned to Naval History Division (Op-29).
4. The translation of this 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 translators are not available in Naval History Division. Research to correct possible inconsistencies and to revamp in smooth form the rough or literal translations did not warrant the expense involved.

John B. Heffernan
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Director of Naval History

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Naval History Division
Washington 25, D. C.
1955

1 Mar. 1944

Items of Political Importance.

On the evening of 29 March the Moscow broadcasting station transmitted the official Russian communique whereupon negotiations with Finland did not yet begin but preparations for such discussions might have been started.

The embassadress in Stockholm forwarded the following conditions of peace to Paasikivi:

1. Rupture with Germany and internment of the German troops, if the occasion should arise with Russian help.
2. Reestablishment of the Finnish-Russian treaty of 1940.
3. Immediate repatriation of the Soviet Unions and Allies' prisoners of war and civil internees. The question of demobilization still should remain in suspense, while the question of reparation should be left to later negotiations in Moscow.

A foreign information saying that unconditional surrender and occupation of Helsinki was asked for, was denied.

In regard to the report of the Prime Minister on the political situation the Finnish Reichstag, after having discussed for one hour in a session on 29 March gave his vote for confidence to the Government. Further treatment of the governments' report has been transferred to the Committee of Foreign Affairs.

According to the German Press Agency the report of the government did not comprise any refusing view point to the possibilities for discussing an armistice in regard to the Sovietic conditions. In the discussion merely liberal circles supported the version that Finland's political and military situation is getting worse frankly said from hour to hour, especially by the evolution of the Eastern Front.

This session of the Reichstag did not bring full clearness.

It can not be assumed that the Finnish Government will accept the above mentioned conditions without ado and immediately. According to reports of the German Embassy the situation became inscrutable.

Following an United-Press information the Argentinean Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that the foreign policy settled by Ramirez will be continued. This would mean that no attempt for resuming diplomatic relations with Germany and Japan would be made.

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The Commander in Chief, Navy proceeded to France for inspections and discussions. The Chief of Operations Division Naval Staff and the Quartermaster General joint the journey.

I. Conference on the situation with the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff.

According to report of the Chief of Coastal Defense Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff the transport of the 89th Infantry Division from Aarhus to Oslo is completed.

From 26 artillery ferry barges which were provided for the Commanding Admiral Defences West and the Commanding Admiral Defences North, 23 were completed following further report.

The Quartermaster General appointed the number of small transport vessels being produced in the following months for the Aegean and the transport space which is needed for these units on land transportation. Beginning with seven Siebel ferries in March in total 42 naval artillery lighters, 28 naval supply lighters and 45 Siebel ferries will be ready for shipping uptil August. The number of trains required hereto will come to 57. Main concentration of transportation with 12, 19 respectively 15 trains will be in May, June and July. In request of the Chief of Defence Branch, Quartermaster Division the army promised its assistance in preparations for transportation.

II. The daily reported damages and sea accidents of vessels inspire the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff to order that for a new time all headquarters will be advised to consider of all the possibilities which may correct these regrettable conditions. Also the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping is to be approached by relevant official letter.

III. The Deputy Chief of the Naval Intelligence Division Naval Staff reports on arguments of the British Minister of Aviation to the stand of aerial warfare, which possibly may characterize one of the most decisive phases of the whole war between February and March. It is said that in the passed year more than 2000 planes, which operated from Great Britain failed to return home. This would mean that nearly 18000 British members of the Air Force would be dead or taken prisoner. Now, the German war production and the transport installations would be entirely within the range of the Allied bombers. But Germany's possibilities for striking back would be not in the least disdaining.

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IV. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff reports that again the Commanding Admiral of the German Naval Command Italy wired for disposition of three MAS-boats for Italy for operations off Nettuno. Quartermaster General together with the Group North/Fleet should examine matters under the point of view that fighting is more important than training.

V. Conference restricted to a Limited Circle. Army Situation:

According to the reports of the Southern and Central Army Group the situation did not seem to have changed generally. Within the area of the Northern Army Group the strong enemy pressure in the area of Pskov is lasting on, it was succeeded in cutting off the enemy penetrations on the Narva front.

At the Italian front our own forces gained terrain everywhere in the beachhead, even in small size only. Here, the planning is to get the enemy landing areas within the range of our own artillery.

VI. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff reports on the conditions of armistice with Finland, announced by the Russians and on the reports which were submitted of the Reichstag Session in Helsinki. The impression is existing that the government is trying to win time.

Special Items:

I. Precautions in the Eastern Baltic Sea:

The Naval Command East is informed on directives of the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff from 29 February referring to the Operation "Tanne" by the Naval Staff.

Referring to the isle of Hochland the Naval Command East receives the following directives:

1. Preparations and accomplishment on behalf of the navy to be carried through by the Naval Command East; for that reason verbal discussions with the subordinated commands (Commanding Admiral Baltic Countries, Commander Minesweepers, East) are to be held, report plans as soon as possible.

2. Directive for the isles of Aland will follow separately.

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3. The circle of persons who are in the secret are to report by name. Inform the Commander in Chief, Chief of Staff and First Staff Officer of the Group North/Fleet.

Referring to the isles of Aeland the Naval Chief East receives the following directive:

1. Direction of command is planned to be taken by the Naval Command East.

2. The circle of persons and the information of Group North/Fleet by the Naval Command East is ordered just in the same manner as in the operation Hochland. The Naval Artillery Detachment provided for this operation will be formed by three batteries from Norway and one battery from the Dutch area. The Staff will be newly set up.

Further directions on selection of the batteries and the assembly area will follow later.

3. Execution of sea transportation is to accomplish in the manner of transfer as of the 214th Infantry Division. Port of destination Mariehamn and Eckero respectively anchorage in the vicinity of those ports as there are no jetties for unloading. Approximately four in total ten or twelve naval landing craft (MFP) or similar vessels are required.

4. Further directives will follow.

The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff receives directives to select the batteries for the naval artillery detachments provided for this operation and to settle the assembly areas.

The Quartermaster's General attention is especially directed to the ordered camouflage and he is ordered to retain for record the names of persons who are knowing in secret.

Copy of the draught 1 SKL I op. 641 respectively 651/44 g kdos Chef-sache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

II. Referring to P Qu 30:

Previous conclusive considerations on the operation against P Qu 30 were reported by the Group North/Fleet. Copy of adequate telegram as per 1 SKL 6511/44 g Kdos in War Diary Part C Volume IIa.

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The P Qu 30 was the convoy, which up till now was the one most closely conducted to the coast and which was proceeding with the remarkable high speed of nine knots in spite of heavy sea.

The limits of submarine operations appeared very clear. This induced the enemy to shift the main concentration of the supply to Russia more to the northern route, to launch raids against the Norwegian coastal waters and thereby launch carrier-operations against the battleship "TIRPITZ" and to calculate with Norway even more for their operational and tactical aims. Further increasing of submarines in the Northern Waters and strengthening of air forces, especially of air torpedo planes appeared necessary to the Group North.

III. The Commander in Chief Air Force/Operations Staff defined his attitude towards the opinion which was expressed by the Naval Staff (see War Diary 17 Feb.) that the majority of the passed submarine operations failed owing to too minor strength of the Air Commander Atlantic Coast and pointed out, that for several times the convoys were thoroughly and continuously spotted without that the submarines could reach noticable results. Certain promise can not be made that a daily number of twelve long range reconnaissance planes ready for action exclusively for purposes of submarine warfare will have to be put at disposal, as to the technical difficulties and operational matters as well as to restrictions of production of the war factories in so far as the German Air Force will not be granted priority to all armament.

Copy of adequate telegram as per 1 SKL 6453/44 g Kdos in War Diary Part C Volume IV.

IV. The assessment requested by the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff on the question of an enemy landing operation south of the Gironde is given with draught 1 SKL I.op. 6572/44 g Kdos. Copy in War Diary Part C, special file "large scale enemy landing operations".

V. The Group South transmits the judgment on the situation which has been taken as basis for the planning of reinforcement of the coastal artillery in the Aegean Area and which includes the call of priority for delays proposed by the Admiral Aegean Sea. This was refused by the Army Group Command E corresponding to the expectations on an enemy attack in the Thracian Area entertained by the Group Command, which should be strengthened in favor to the Greece area forwarded to the South.

Principally the Naval Staff agrees with the judgment on the situation of the Group South according to which the circumference of the Aegean area is mostly exposed to danger and here the navy has to recognize the focal point of defences.

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But for operational planning the following has to be taken into consideration:

a. The problem of supply and transportation of the Aegean isles inclusive Crete and Dodecanese really is so difficult that stock piling for the isles must range prior to further reinforcement.

b. Further strengthening of defences only is justified on that place where sufficient supply and storage can be carried through.

c. The holding of the very Balkans is decisive for total defence of the southeastern area. Therefore, it is to be considered carefully whether [or] not the minor forces available must be put in operation on the mainland or islands near the mainland that are easier to supply, instead of on advanced positions, the defence of which may become difficult in time of enemy attacks.

d. Especially the defence of Salonika as base and supply center is very important.

e. Crete already has been fortified in large scale.

The Naval Staff fully agrees with the opinion expressed by the Group South, that the Western-Greece and Ionian isles are of particular importance.

Priority is judged by the Naval Staff as follows:

- a. Western Greece
- b. Salonika
- c. Attica
- d. Lemnos
- e. Peloponnesus
- f. Crete
- g. Dodecanese

Copy of adequate draught 1 SKL I.op. 580/44 g Kdos Chef-sache in War Diary Part D Volume XIV.

VI. The Group South renewed the request for disposition of a new Naval Artillery Detachment with nine medium-sized and one light battery for the Naval Shore Commander Salonika and for transfer of this Naval Artillery Detachment from the area Leningrad-Oranienbaum.

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The Quartermaster General informed the Group South of the fact that the Group will receive in total three additional Naval Artillery Detachments and that according to earlier directives of those the Naval Artillery Detachment 541 has to be put into operation in the Adriatic area, referring to the decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy. The selection of the operational area for both the other Naval Artillery Detachments is left to the Group's own decision. Disposal of more forces is not possible.

VII. Being interested in further confiding cooperation with the Croatian, the Chief of Naval Liaison Staff Croatian principally asked for sticking to the allotment of the six PT boats to the Croatian Navy and for immediate recovering the lack of practice in navigation, which was the reason why the original promise was cancelled.

The Naval Staff sticks to its decision. The situation requires the immediate action of the flotilla and therefore it is impossible to wait for conclusion of the Croatian training.

VIII. The Naval Staff accepted the request of the German Naval Command Italy on forming up an independent escort squadron consisting of torpedo-boat TA "23", "25", "26" and SG "15" of the 10th Torpedo-boat Flotilla. The squadron will be subordinated to the 7th Coast Patrol Force. Chief of squadron will be the senior commanding officer. Demands of personnel will not arise.

IX. The Minelaying Experimental Command reports that a new British aerial mine was salvaged in the western Baltic Sea which will be named ELM/A X. Characteristics of this type see Copy of the report as per 1 SKL 6578/44 g Kdos in War Diary Part C Volume VI. At this time the mine is not clearable.

X. According to intelligence report via Ostro from the 12/13 Feb. approximately 40 vessels of the "Reserve Fleet" fully loaded with war material and laid up in Scotland, which was supposed to be an operational reserve of war material for an invasion of the mainland were withdrawn to the Mediterranean Area and not yet replaced. Thereby the tonnage laid up in Scotland Lochs has been reduced by 35 - 38 %. The majority of the freighters joined a large scale convoy which may have arrived at North Africa at about 10 Feb.

According to another Ostro-report withdrawal of British Divisions from Italy to the homeland were certainly not carried out, also no closed divisions were transported from the homeland to the Italian Theater during the last weeks. But in contrary to that, it must be counted on that more American troops will be carried to the Mediterranean Theater.

1 Mar. 1944

Situation 1 March 1944

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

With Radiogram 1307 submarine supply ship BRAKE receives the following directive:

"For meeting with submarine approach point which is located 1 degree more to the West and 15 degrees more to the South than "Spalier". Approach this point daily at 1200 Mean Local Time and wait until dusk circumfering up to 15 miles. Shore off at night. Arrival of BRAKE at this point is estimated from about 11. Approach the meeting point with particular attention; if meeting traffic or enemy air or surface forces shore off immediately and rigourosly to the South-East."

II. Situation West Area:

Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group were 13, at the 19th Group were 36 and in the Azores Squadron one plane was detected in action.

Five locations of British vessels were reported in the rendezvous area.

Following Ostro-report from 12 Feb. the observation of ships concentration in Great Britain resulted no essential news. Unusual requests of bunker coal were not submitted.

According to another Intelligence report strong air raids are to be planned during the night of 5/6 March on Brest, Rouen, Le Havre and Calais with the utmost care to harbor installations. At the same time British light naval forces are to mop up the waters from German vessels. In time of suitable weather commando raids are to be provided for the 6/7 March against several places on the channel coast. Thereby operations with paratroopers are planned.

1 Mar. 1944

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

The destroyers Z "23" and ZH "1" left for exercises at 0700 as planned. Six outgoing submarines have been escorted.

During the night of 1 March the transfer of the 4th Torpedo-boat-Flotilla and the mine exploding vessel 157 from St. Malo respectively Lezardrieux to Brest is planned.

Channel Area:

During the night of 29 February the 5th and 9th PT boat Flotilla explored the channel in Plymouth-Bay and sighted nothing.

The 2nd and 8th PT boat Flotilla put out for torpedo operations against the South-convoy. One enemy plane was repulsed by machine-gun fire. In approaching, motor gun-boats have been sighted, which were avoided. Owing to increasing bad visibility, return to Ymuiden was started at 2300.

The 4th Torpedo-boat Flotilla with the mine exploding vessel "157" transferred from Cherbourg to Lezardrieux respectively St. Malo.

At 0230 the convoy of the steamer HECHT left Boulogne. Off the mole in going out HECHT was pushed towards an caisson and scored inrush of water. The ship was towed again to Boulogne. But besides this, the ship struck the harbor barrages.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Off Wangerooge and off Brest four groundmines were swept. The stranded steamer MAASBURG in trying to get off, was attacked by ten Mosquito planes in low-level flight. Owing to damage of one tug the steamer was not yet succeeded in towing off. The crew was rescued. The Steamer caught fire. The other ships of the convoy 1225 Hook Van holland Elbe River entered Elbe estuary. Two steamers of the convoy 485 Elbe-Hook returned, owing to rough seas.

In the Zuider Zee and in the Zealand Waters four convoys with 52,000 BRT were carried out.

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The Naval Command North reports, that independently of barrage escorts continuous channel sweeping in consideration of enemy mining concentrations can not be executed no more because of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla beginning with routine dockyard repairs in the middle of Mar. and in consequence of the withdrawal of four minesweepers to the Commanding Admiral Defences Baltic and of the detaching of the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla and three artillery ferry barges to the Commander Minesweepers East.

Simultaneously withdrawal of these boats means diminution of anti-aircraft guns to 28 10.5 cm barrels and 180 guns of light and second anti-aircraft artillery.

At least, in regard to the concentrated enemy minelaying operations the Naval Command North asks for cession of subsistental disposal for the four boats belonging to the Commanding Admiral Defences East.

In February 1944 the following operations were carried through in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences North:

6 East bound convoys with 33 ships with				68715 BRT
5 West bound convoys "	27 "	"	"	60955 "
Elbe-Ems traffic	"	77 "	"	155148 "
Ems-Elbe "	"	82 "	"	172359 "
Elbe-Esbjerg "	"	7 "	"	10614 "
Esbjerg-Elbe "	"	7 "	"	9181 "

Merchant shipping and escort duties in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences North suffered in weekly's average of the month of Feb. 1944 contrary to the average of the whole year 1943 a decreasing number of 318 ships with 354,000 BRT to 251 ships with 322,700 BRT. This statement was made in the course of an examination in order to calculate, if it might not be possible to withdraw at least temporary escort forces from the convoy traffic in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences North.

The Commanding Admirals Defences North is that monthly restriction of the Netherland shipping to 12 convoys consisting of six steamers of 3500 BRT each may be suitable.

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The Rotterdam traffic means relief to the traffic in the inner zone of the Heligoland Bight, which otherwise may become the focal point of enemy minelaying and air raid operations and therefore would require adequately higher expenses of power. Enemy action in narrow waters is much more effective than on longer routes.

In any way continuous channel sweeping is necessary in order to pass destroyers, torpedo-boats and supply ships to the West Area and also for evacuation and reinforcement transports in event of enemy landing operations in the Dutch-Belgian areas just as for accomplishment of necessary minelaying operations in the South-West fortification and off the Dutch coast. According to the recent development of enemy minelaying tactics, short planned channel preparations are as good as hopeless.

Every interruption in channel controlling means entire blocking in short time.

In monthly average of the year 1943 108 mines were swept and in Feb. 1944 125 British ELM and LM thereof 45 off Hook were swept in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences North.

Norway/Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Thirteen planes were detected on missions over the North Sea.

Own Situation:

On 28 and 29 February penetrations of 18 respectively eight planes into the area of Kirkenes-Petsamo as well as penetrations of five planes into the area of Vardoe were reported.

At 1231 on 1 March the convoy of the troop transport JUPITER was attacked by enemy submarine with torpedoes north of Mosjoen.

Twenty north bound and 17 south bound ships were escorted.

With four submarines the group Taifun is formed up in AC 45.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring five minesweepers and ten other vessels were detected in the wireless telegraphic picture with the staff of the Fleet and the staff of the watching posts.

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Between Kronstadt and Lavensari remarkable busy wireless telephonic exchanges were detected.

Own Situation:

Twenty-five boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances and four minesweeping planes and 21 boats and seven minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping in the remaining Baltic area.

Off Travemünde and in the Fehmarn-Belt one mine was swept.

Out of the 57 mines which dropped ashore in the last minelaying operation by planes, 53 were salvaged, four were blasted.

Escort duties were carried out as planned. Nothing particular happened.

From the forces destined for the Commander Minesweepers East the boats B "6" and B "35" and WF "119" entered Gotenhafen. The boats AF "49", "2", "5" and "9" returned to Kiel owing to bad weather.

The AF "29" and "35" are lying in Memel, the AF "30", "31", "32", "46", and "50" in Libau, AF "37" in Stettin.

On application of the Naval Command East (see War Diary 28 Feb.) the Naval Staff decides that principally engagement of squadrons, inspections and schools for any kind of minesweeping operations may only be considered in case of special events and after having preliminary approval of the Naval Staff as these kind of extra operations of training squadrons divert them in unbearable extent. Operations of the 1st Motor Minesweeper Flotilla in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences East are left to the Naval Command's decision so far as employment in the Gulf of Finland is not required due to the icing situation. The mining and Harbor Defence School Flotilla may be restored as soon as possible.

Situation on the Mainland.

The battle Headquarters of the Army High Command 18 is now situated in Wermoski. The final battle Headquarters will be Werro.

According to judgment on the situation by the Naval Command East very strong enemy attack from the Newel-front with thrust direction Riga and the attempt planned at the same time to breach the Narwa-front and to roll up the coastal defences in the Gulf of Finland must be expected.

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V. Merchant Shipping.

The intelligence Division Naval Staff reports on the total shipments to Russia in the year 1943 under particular consideration of the development and effort of the Russian Far-East merchant shipping. Copy of the report 4637/44 g Kdos in War Diary Part C, Volume XI. According to this report in total 7830 000 tons of cargo were transported from Oct. 1941 to Dec. 1943 on all supply routes at sea, out of which altogether 7025 000 tons reached their destination.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

Enemy Situation:

On 26 Feb. the submarine U "66" sunk one steamer of 5000 BRT from a convoy east-bound and another probably off the Gold-coast. In addition to that on 1 Mar. the boat sunk one ship of 7000 BRT single proceeding with escort vessel heading East in EV 5877.

In BD 6362 the submarine U "441" sighted one control group and sunk one destroyer with Zaunkönig-torpedo. No special reports.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

During the day only some isolated penetrations into Belgium-Northern France and Western France in the sea and coastal area without attacks were reported.

In the evening, 164 of our own bombers operated against London, where 131 succeeded in attacking.

Eight planes were lost.

Reich Territory.

During the day isolated enemy reconnaissance planes were reported in the area of Kassel, which probably spotted the Eder-reservoir.

During the night of 1 Mar. several hundred enemy planes divided into two groups penetrated into the Reich territory flying over Reims, Strassburg. These two groups attacked Stuttgart from the South and South-East. The raid in its cause of damage was judged to be more severe than all other up till now. Damage of industry was inflicted in the Bosch, Daimler-Benz and Kodak works. Reports of our own results in defence are not yet available.

1 Mar. 1944

Mediterranean Theater:

On 29 Feb. 350 enemy planes were in operation in the area of the beachhead where nine were shot down. Several 100 planes attacked the ground organization in the area of Viterbo, two were shot down by our own antiaircraft artillery.

Eight planes were reported to be over the Aegean and eleven planes were in the coastal area from Cattaro to Bar. On the evening of 29 Feb. one freighter of 5000 BRT was sunk and four freighters and one landing-craft with altogether 15000 BRT was seriously damaged by 47 of our own bombers in the area of Nettuno. Two of our own planes were lost. On 1 Mar. our own planes did reconnaissance flights.

The Algiers Bay and the harbor of Ajaccio were spotted.

Eastern Front:

On 29 Feb. 402 own and 45 enemy missions were counted on the Eastern Front. Two of our own planes were shot down, seven enemy losses were reported.

Evaluation of the aerial photograph taken from Murmansk to Kola-Bay on 29 Feb. resulted [indicated] 57 freighters with altogether 331 000 BRT between Kola and Krasnaja Guba. Off Cape Salmi six destroyers and three patrol boats off Rosta, 1 destroyer lying in the drydock was recognized.

On the afternoon of 1 Mar. one Ju "88" plane sighted in the Eastern fairway one convoy consisting of seven freighters of 5 - 7000 BRT each and two ice-breakers and two tankers heading SSE.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group Command West.

Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 28 Feb. one CAIRO class cruiser left Gibraltar together with two transports, and one auxiliary cruiser on unknown course.

On the morning of 29 Feb. one DELHI class cruiser, three destroyers, one transport and three freighters arrived at Gibraltar coming from the Atlantic.

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The vessels which were reported by Tangers at 0300 on 29 Feb. were recognized in the afternoon from Tres Forcas as a convoy consisting of five big transports, seven freighters and one destroyer heading to the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

On board of the SG "15" in Marseille fire broke out which could be extinguished. Cause was unknown. On board of the battleship STRASSBOURG water rushed in on equally unknown cause.

The Group West corrects the report of 29 February saying that the steamer ARTESIEN was not transferred from the Italian area, but operated in transport duties for the Organization Todt within the own area. But nevertheless the Group West maintained its application of stopping the transfer program of tonnage of the Italian area and directed that as far as possible the operation with steamers of large tonnage may be avoided in transportation service for the Organization Todt east of Toulon.

The Naval Staff agreed with the opinion of the Group West and ordered to report the resumption of transfer.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

In the landing area of Nettuno our own air reconnaissance stated ship movements of usual extent. Particular important points were not spotted. Following a report of observation of Elba, two destroyers coming from Sardinia were sailing between Corsica and Elba with course to and from Capraia.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon and evening of 28 Feb. about 20 detonations were observed south of Genoa. The detonations might be caused by rough sea within our own barrages.

Two TA-boats (torpedoboats) left Spezia for operation NUSSKNACKER and two harbor defence boats left Venice and Ravenna for minelaying operations.

During the night of 1 Mar. the minelaying operation "Wildente" off Capraia is planned. The damaged steamdr LUIGI MARTINI 1847 BRT struck a mine on 28 Feb. in the area off Ravenna was towed up to Chioggia and sunk in the harbor.

1 Mar. 1944

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

Following reconnaissance of the forwarded coastal areas probably two torpedo-boats and one submarine were sailing 30 miles NE of Termoli on 29 Feb. at 0840. On 27 Feb. three spitfire attacked anti-aircraft emplacements west of Bar and army strongholds north of Durazzo with gunfire, one plane was shot down.

Own Situation:

The steamer KAPITAN DIEDRICHSEN left Pola southward bound at 1815 with escort of torpedoboat TA "36", "37", submarine-chasers "201" and "205" and motor minesweepers R "188", "190" and "191".

At 2145 the convoy was engaged with three suspected enemy destroyers, which were sailing unseen leeward the shore west of Isto.

The torpedoboat TA "37" was disabled by two enemy salvos and stopped. The steamer DIEDRICHSEN was shot afire with three or four salvos. The fire was answered and one hit was recognized. The enemy went off when DIEDRICHSEN was burning in full scale. The TA "36" and submarine-chaser "205" sailed to Pola with the crew of DIEDRICHSEN. The R-boats remained in the vicinity of the steamer. Torpedoboat TA "37" is being towed in.

The place where the submarine-chaser "201" has been left is unknown, she is suspected to be lost. At 1145 on 1 Mar. the steamer DIEDRICHSEN sunk. Therefore the operation "Lampenschirm" has been interrupted. Brief battle report of the 11th. Escorting Flotilla see Radiogram 1200.

On the morning of 29 Feb. the torpedo-boat TA "20" and three motor barges left Triest southward bound in order to transport aircraft patrol for Split and Metkowitz. But the operation had to be interrupted because two barges were disabled.

In Arza, on 25 Feb. one battery was assumed by the Naval Artillery Detachment 623 in ready to action condition.

b. Aegean.

At 1500 on 29 Feb. one sailing ship running in charter for the Red Cross was shot afire by four enemy vessels off the northwestern coast of Peleponnese. The shore command put into action near Andros landed on Skyros on 29 Feb. for mopping up the Isle. Owing to rough sea two J infantry boats stranded on the morning of 1 Mar.

1 Mar. 1944

In the area of the Admiral Aegean 23 ground mines were swept by mine-sweeping planes and six mines by minesweepers in the month of Feb. Two drifting mines were sunk by gunfire, three of our own mines were salvaged. One enemy mine detonated.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence three minesweepers and three PT-boats were detected off the southern part of the Caucasian coast up to 0600. On the evening of 29 Feb. one submarine was detected southwest to west of the Crimea coast another one was detected in the eastern Black Sea. Two boats with unknown position are supposed to be on the central Black Sea.

According to wireless telegraphic traffic the destroyer SPOSSOBNY presumably was at sea in the SE part in the morning. In the evening except the cruiser WOROSHILOW the cruisers KRASNY, KAWKAS with destroyer BESPOTSHADNY and the Captain of the 1st Destroyer Division were detected at sea. In the afternoon one PT-boat was detected in the area south of Kertsch-peninsula and in the evening submarine O was detected in the waters off the southern Crimea coast and submarine P west of Cape Tarkau.

Own Situation:

During the night of 29 Feb. the 1st PT-boat Flotilla operating leeward the Caucasian Coast met no traffic and no patrolling, return was started untimely owing to bad weather conditions.

During the night of 1 March the patrol line in the Kerch-Straits remained unoccupied because of bad weather conditions.

Minesweeping, submarine-chase and clearance duties were carried out without special events.

In the morning submarine U "20" arrived at Sevastopol having accomplished minelaying operations off Poti for taking over new torpedoes.

The stranded naval landing craft off Kilia and the submarine-chaser run aground off San Gherge are salvaged. Escorting duties were accomplished without special events.

IX. Situation Eastern Asia.

Bismarck-Archipelago.

On 29 Feb. American troops landed on the isle of Los Negros situated within the Admiralty-Islands. The landing operation was surprising and succeeded. It gives the Americans a favorable base for interference to the Japanese supply route to Rabaul and Bougainville.

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On 27 Feb. USA-forces shelled Rabaul from the sea-side for a new time, while simultaneously a heavy air-raid was carried out. Other Allied Naval Forces were busy on the Madank coast and off Buka.

Caroline Islands.

The USA-Headquarters in Hawaii reported that after examination of the reconnaissance photographs taken of the harbor of Truk, 23 ships were stated as sunken.

On 25 Feb. Ponape, Kussi, Nauru and the base on the Marshall Islands were attacked by the enemy air force.

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Items of Political Importance:

Reuter transmits utterances of political and military circles of Ankara, whereafter British and American war material from the Middle East destined for Turkey do not arrive any more. In the southern Turkish ports too the shipments of armaments nearly come to zero. The stagnation in Allied shipments seemed to have occurred simultaneously with the return of the British Military Delegation to Cairo. Generally, one has the impression in Ankara that fundamental changes of British Policies on behalf Turkey should become true, but at any rate, the Allied seemed to have abandoned all hopes that Turkey actively may share in the war.

Conference on the Situation with Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General reports that from six PT boats three were assigned to the German Naval Command Italy for operation with the 10th PT boat Flotilla and three to the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces with the right for the Naval Staff to recourse to purposes of the Naval Special Operational Detachment.

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division reports on arguments of Prime Minister Tojo in the meeting of the cabinet on 22 Feb. in regard to reports of the German embassy in Tokyo. Therein is said: The Situation of war is said to be very serious. Previously, the enemy should have advanced to the Marshall Islands and recently should have carried out an air raid on Truk. The present fighting situation should be very difficult and no optimism would be allowed. If this crisis would be overcome, a way for safe final victory would be opened to Japan. But assumption for that would be the establishment of close reliance between the military Supreme Command and the government. It would be

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necessary to carry out the required strategical precautions in the right moment with boldness and comprehension of all strength of the government and of the people for the attack against the USA and Great Britain. In this decisive period the government would be bent on overcoming all obstacles and on bold accomplishment of all strategical requirements. Certain precautions would have to be worked out in a hurry.

III. Army Situation:

The large scale battle in the area of Newel is lasting on and in the whole succeeded in defense. In the area of the Army Group North the enemy is pushing forward to the panther position up to Pskov. On the Narva-front enemy attacks increased in strength.

In the operation against the landing front south of the Tiber River the original aims of attack again could not be reached this time. The strength of enemy defense was stated to be extraordinary strong.

IV. Chief of Staff of Naval Staff reports that the Fuehrer pose the question asking what was done against the PT boats supply traffic between Lysekil and Great Britain.

The Naval Staff had to withdraw all forces for pushing tasks in the Baltic Sea. The only possibility is existing in sufficient air reconnaissance in order to approach destroyers held in three hours readiness. But, naturally, this possibility is extremely limited.

V. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division Naval Staff reports on the situation in Finland owing to a report of the Military Attaché from his visit to the Minister of War on 29 Feb. This one declared that the conditions known at that time would be unacceptable. The government's attitude is inscrutable.

In every way one may count on the fact that the decision at least still may turn out in disfavor to Germany. An article of the leading social democratic newspaper, dated from 29 Feb. is pointing in this direction, which apparently was written in knowledge of the Russian conditions and which in any case emphasizes further accomplishments of these possibilities of peace. To the same direction points a report which was received by the Foreign Office on behalf of a discussion of the embassy with a member of the Finnish Cabinet.

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Special Items

I. Concerning the Eastern Baltic Sea

1. The Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff, Navy, transmits the following:

I. "In the framework of preparation for directive 50 the possible development of the situation in Finland requires considerations as quickly as possible on the following basis:

a. Attempt for evacuation of troops and supplies from Finland to the homeland at least evacuation of the greatest part of stocks stored in south and central Finland on sea routes.

b. Not only preparation for the tonnage but the required naval forces and escorting vessels also.

c. Taking on account the possibilities that in partial modification of existing plans forces won by evacuation from Finland could be brought into operation for executing "Tanne". Therefore checking and judgment asked for following questions:

1. To what extent can troops and supplies be evacuated via ports of the Gulf of Bothnia.

2. Which space from the tonnage of the Baltic Sea can be proceeded in short time to Finland, how much and in what time can be carried with it.

3. Which part of naval forces and patrol vessels can normally be brought into operation for protecting the transfer from Finland.

4. Is there any possibility within the bounds of careful thinning out of stocks and transloading into the vicinity of Finnish ports, also of displacing on suitable ships lying there.

II. In connection with foregoing questions continuous informations to the Operations Staff are required on:

a. The icing-situation of the Gulf of Bothnia in particular consideration of the Finnish ports.

b. The German merchant tonnage lying at times in Finnish ports and which will be available at short notice for evacuation of supplies and troops.

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First hand informations at the earliest possible date to these questions are requested for the Operations Staff, Navy.

III. It is referred to closely restricted circle of persons in charge of owing to necessities of keeping the secret. The Chief of Shipping and Transport Branch was shortly informed during his presence in the Fuehrer's Headquarter."

2. In order to execute the operation "Tanne" the Naval Staff asks the Commanding General Armed Forces Norway, with copy to the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff, the Naval Command East and Norway, the Army General Staff Operational Department, Group North Fleet to keep the forces destined for transfer to the Army Group North of:

4 Army coastal batteries (thereof 2 batteries with 10.5 cm guns (field) and 2 batteries of 15.5 cm guns (field)) mounted on wheel trails.

1 fortress engineer staff.

1 fortress engineer battalion.

1 rock drilling company.

Units of personnel to man four coastal batteries in the area of Oslo in readiness for transfer and for short termed transloading.

Confirmation as well as further description of the troops is requested.

The Commanding General Armed Forces, Denmark, with copy to Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff, Naval Command East, General Staff of the Army, Group North Fleet is requested to keep the 416th Infantry Division without the East Battalion which is detached for transfer to the Army Group North in disposal for [short-termed ?] shipment in the area of Aarhus.

Finally the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff is requested to transfer the forces provided for the operation "Tanne" into the area of Danzig and to put them at disposal for short-termed transloading.

Confirmation as well as further description of the troops is requested.

Copy of adequate draughts 1 SKL I op. 679, 678 and 677/44 g Kdos Chef-sache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

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3. The Operations Division, Naval Staff informs the Commander in Chief, Navy, via Naval Shore Commander, Normandy of the political situation of Finland as following:

1. "Following the information of the Foreign Office the first day of the Reichstag session did not result any essential facts. The Finnish Government strives hard for alternation of the conditions. Further discussion of the Reichstag in three or two days.

2. According to report of Naval Attaché, whose source is a good agent, the Reichstag passed quietly, minor opposition. Prime Minister should have said, necessity of Finnish decision would occur earlier as expanded by reason of development on the large northern/eastern front. Russian immediate conditions would be unacceptable. The government would strive hard for alternation. The Reichstag would approve of Government's declaration in passing to the order of the day. The Ministry of War should have declared the conditions to be hard and unacceptable. According to report of the Attaché, the key for all coming events would remain in the military development on the Eastern Front."

II. The Admiral attached to the Army Group B received order to inform the Army Group B on the subject of judgment upon the coastal defenses of the Heligoland Bight (see War Diary 27 Feb.) and the information that the report of the Naval Command North on the present condition of defenses of Heligoland Bight and the judgment of the Armed Forces High Command had been submitted. Therefore, change of judgment on behalf of the side of the Armed Forces High Command will be expected.

III. The Operations Division, Naval Staff informs the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff of the statement and experiences in the fighting against the convoy PQ 30 according to the reports from the Commander Submarines Norway and the Group North, Fleet and explains the reasons why in spite of figurative efforts of the reconnaissance forces of the 5th Air Force, which under most difficult defenses and weather conditions happened to seize the enemy again and again, to remain in contact with the enemy and to transmit good reports of positions, the submarines did not succeed in good results. Copy of the writing I SKL I L 6579 G kdos in War Diary Part C Volume IIa.

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IV. Concerning to changes in the organization of the Department Foreign Countries Intelligence Division, the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command has issued the following directives dated 23 Feb:

1. "With effect from 1 Mar. 1944 the Bureau Foreign Countries is eliminated from the Department Foreign Countries Intelligence Division and will be subordinated to the Operations Staff Armed Forces. As until now the Chief of this Division, Vice Admiral Buerckner remains to my direct disposal for special tasks and for the service of Armed Forces Attachés.

2. The Department Foreign Countries Intelligence Division gets first of all the designation "Intelligence Department" (Abw). To it are subordinated the sections Intelligence Z (Abw.Z), Intelligence I, II, III.

3. The Colonel in the General Staff v. Bentivegni will be commissioned to take charge of the affairs of the department up to further directives.

4. The employment of the Admiral Canaris will be decided later on. He is attached to "the officers of the Armed Forces High Command to my disposal."

The Organization and Mobilization Branch is charged in view of future organization of this branch to make contact with the officers coming in consideration for the ordered interference of strong forces of the Navy.

V. In the beginning of January the General Staff of the Army/Foreign Armies West examined in a sketch the possibilities and chances of an enemy dislocation of main concentration to the Balkans with the purpose of succeeding in quick decision of war and thereby putting up the question, if the required large shipping space may be available to the enemy powers and if there might exist ample facilities of debarkation in the Mediterranean. The Intelligence Division, Naval Staff examined the questions in cut regarding to the strength of troops given by the General Staff (in total 1,750,000 men with weapons and equipment) and thereby stated, that the formations to be approached may come to the half from Great Britain and from the east coast of the USA. For one single transfer there should have provided 10.5 millions BRT of transports for troops and 14 millions BRT of freighter tonnage for equipment. Besides this, 3 millions of BRT would be continuously engaged for supply yearly, thereof 2.1 millions BRT would come to the supplies from USA. Examination of facilities for debarkation resulted that the following time would be required for the whole development: from Great Britain approximately 4 months, from the USA about five months for equipment and material and about two and a half/three months for the debarkation of troops.

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In total, there might be needed seven millions BRT of tonnage, of which at present about six millions BRT may be available for operational purposes. One million more may temporary be withdrawn from civil shipping. The disposition of troop transport space makes no difficulties. Thereof results, that with the whole length of time for transfer of four or five months the movements would have already been started in December in order to come to a conclusion in April.

VI. The Intelligence Post, detached to the Naval Command North Sea transmits a report on the investigation of a crew member of the British Liberty-ship FORT BELLINGHAM, which was sunk by one of our submarines in the northern Arctic Ocean. Copy of the report as per 1 SKL 8151/44 geheim in War Diary Part D Volume "Records on the enemy situation."

Situation 2 March 1944

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters.

No special reports.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group six and at the 19th Group 46 planes were detected in being on missions. Six locations of British vessels were reported in the rendezvous area.

The Admiralty announced the loss of the destroyer WARWICK. On the 18th of Feb. the destroyer was recognized for the last time being at sea in channel area. She probably may got lost in the engagement with PT boats during the night of 25 Feb. off the British East coast.

At 1334 air reconnaissance sighted south of Lizard Head six or ten steamers without giving no details for course, at 1530 in the western part of the Lyme Bay one steamer heading West and at 1531 off Falmouth four steamers and two patrol vessels heading west.

According to Intelligence report from London dated 13 Jan. the C-in-C Western Approaches represented the opinion that after the sinking of the battleship SCHARNHORST the danger for the convoys on the northern route would now be so unimportant that the largest part of the Home Fleet may be stationed in South England in order to attack German vessels in Channel area and blockade runners in the Biscay Bay. But,

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contrary to that the C-in-C Home-Fleet recognized further threatening of the northern convoys by battleship TIRPITZ and other ships. The first Sea-Lord supported the desire of the CinC Western Approaches. Therefore a greater part of the Home-Fleet was transferred to the Southwest and subordinated to the C-in-C Plymouth.

All repair shipyards in the British ports are overcrowded with landing craft, which are to be repaired and overhauled. According to opinion of many naval officers, an invasion may be impossible so far this bottleneck would not be overcome. The bottleneck of repairs effects disturbances to the repair of Mediterranean landing craft which have to be sent to the homeland. This might have been one of the main reasons for the journey of General Wilson to Great Britain, as the strategical plannings of the Mediterranean Theater were disturbed essentially by these delays of repairs.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

In Quiberon Bay and off the Gironde one mine each was swept.

The destroyers Z "23" and ZH "1" carried out routine exercises according to plan and entered the Gironde in the evening.

Two submarines were escorted ingoing. The 4th Torpedo-boats Flotilla proceeding from St. Malo to Brest in escorting at far distance the convoy of the mine exploding vessel "157" was engaged with five enemy destroyers off the northern coast of Brittany. The enemy was detected in early times by Radar locations and was sighted in good visibility and clear horizon at 0220 in strength of five destroyers of the I-class. Double spread fan of torpedoes shot by torp. boat move [?] was outmaneuvered by shoving off. The escort was accomplished without further events. Preliminary report of the 4th Torpedo-boats Flotilla see radiogram 0840. Summary of battle report see radiogram 2040. The composition of the own squadron with 2 torpedo-boats, "39" and the older boats "MÖVE" and "WOLF" effected unfavorable conditions. The enemy in detecting our numerous convoy formations by Radar location apparently had no clear decision upon its real strength and composition, as he on the other hand undoubtedly might have taken advantage from its own superior battle strength opposed to our own naval forces.

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Channel Area:

During the night of 2 Mar. torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas against convoys in the Plymouth-Bay is planned owing to the results of air reconnaissance.

Special Items:

The Group West reports that the transfer of steamers from the West Area to the Homeland during the period of new moon in the end of Feb. may be considered as failure. The steamer RECUM is lying in Boulogne for eight days owing to damages. SPRAMEX could not advance in time, due to weather conditions. Transfer to Cherbourg is intended.

The ATLANTA may not be ready for sea before 7 Mar. because of her engines disabled in trials run. Now these three steamers are to be transferred in the period of new moon during Mar. Therefore the steamers originally planned for the month of Mar. were curtailed except for MEXPHALTE, the transfer of which is planned in Mar. as 4th ship.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Owing to stormy weather conditions patrol and minesweeping duties were suspended. All escorts have been broken off.

Norway/Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Seven planes were detected in operation at the 18th Group Command.

2. Own Situation:

On 29 Feb. and on 1 Mar. six penetrations into the area of Petsamo with bombing were reported, one penetration in the area of Kirkenes and two in the area of Vardoe were reported.

At 0500 on 2 Mar. the Norwegian steamer LOTE stranded in the western approaches of Drontheim. At 2238 the steamer THOR (2526 BRT) with

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coal presumably was torpedoed off Buhdmen by enemy submarine and sunk.

Thirty-one northbound and twenty-eight southbound ships were escorted.

From the ten submarines type VIIc held in readiness in south Norwegian ports against enemy landing operations, three have arrived at Bergen up to now. There are planned for Bergen four, for Kristiansand South four and for Stavanger two boats.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

No special reports.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 26 boats were there and in the running Baltic Sea 53 boats and three minesweeping planes engaged in mine-sweeping. Off Fehmarn, in the Luebeck-Bay and in the Kiel-Bay three mines were swept. Owing to mine detonation a Danish motor schooner sprung a leak north of Samsøe.

The convoys were carried out on schedule and without special events.

The Naval Command East transmits the report of the Commanding Admiral Defences East whereafter minesweeping tasks have increased essentially owing to the accentuation of the mining situation and the sweeping of training areas for inspectorats and schools, so that the 12 minesweeping planes subordinated as to operational matters to the Commanding Admiral Defences East no more will be sufficient for the execution of these tasks. The Commanding Admiral Defences East announced the want of 18 further minesweeping planes. The apply was supported by the Naval Command East and as minimum demand increasing of the squadron's active number from 12 to 18 planes is requested.

Regarding the situation on the mainland. No special events were submitted.

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V. Submarine Warfare:

On 29 Feb. the submarine U "183" sunk a modern large tonnage tanker of 12000 BRT with four torpedoes in the Indian Ocean within the area of Colombo. With seven other shots of older torpedoes from Penang the boat did not succeed.

Submarine U "744" sunk in the North-Atlantic in B E 5221 three small tankers at 1000 BRT each.

At 0310 in CG 5586 submarine U "421" was attacked by Gibraltar plane. According to radio monitoring this same plane reported SOS at 0331 in the same area.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

Western Area:

During the day busy penetrations into Belgium-Northern France were reported with attacks on working grounds and airfields as well as on transport installations. In western France attack of 100 Fortresses which were escorted by strong fighter screen on the airfield of Chartres was reported. The field was seriously damaged and can not be used for landing.

During the night of 2 Mar. 145 enemy planes penetrated into the area of Belgium-Northern France. In the area of Maastricht-Bruxelles industrial plants and one airfield was attacked. One close rank formation of about 250 planes flew over the Somme-mouth up till south of Paris without attacking.

Reich Territory:

During the day strong bomber squadrons penetrated via the Schelde-estuary into the area of Rhein-Main in the afternoon hours and partially advanced up to the area of Coburg-Bayreuth-Mannheim was attacked inflicting minor damage only. With slight respectively medium sized damage both Ludwigshafen and Frankfurt were raided. On return course 60 bombs were dropped on Coblenz but failed and hit in its masses the town woods. In the evening isolated enemy planes penetrated into the area of the Rhenian-Westfalian industry district. 34 bombs were dropped on Muenchen-Gladbach.

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Mediterranean Theater:

On 1 Mar. only minor reconnaissance and fighter bomber activity was carried out. On the evening of 1 Mar. one of our own bomber operation consisting of 20 planes attacked ship targets in the harbor of Anzio and inflicted damage on one steamer of 5000 BRT.

In the course of 2 Mar. our own planes carried out photograph spotting in the area of Algiers. Results, see situation of the day. Further results of reconnaissance, see enemy situation in the Western Mediterranean. Reconnaissance carried out in the eastern Mediterranean on the Turkish coast and in the delta of the Nil-River yielded no result.

Eastern Area:

On 1 Mar. 720 own and 224 enemy missions were carried out on the Eastern Front. Two of our own planes were shot down and five lost enemy planes were reported.

On 1 Mar. our own Air Force annihilated five enemy boats in the Kerch Straits.

In the operational area of the 5th Air Force reconnaissance against QP convoys was resumed.

In the report on the Aerial Situation West No. 30 dated 1 Mar. the Commander in Chief, Air Operations Staff Ic deals with the tactical statements which were made during the British-American air offensive operation on 19-20 Feb. Furtheron, extracts from a Churchill-speech held on 22 Feb. referring to the aerial warfare were reported. The Operations Division, Naval Staff informs the Group North-Fleet, West and South, the Naval Commands East and North by the draught 1 SKL I L 6661/44 g Kdos Copy in War Diary Part C Volume V.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

From Gibraltar one cruiser of the CAIRO class, one transport, two freighters and four escort vessels left for the Mediterranean. There was one convoy, presumably UGS 33, in strength of one transport,

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53 freighters, eleven tankers with seven escort vessels passing through the straits into the Mediterranean. In the afternoon eleven ships left Gibraltar West/bound. The unit was reported from Purta Canero as convoy of 14 freighters with four corvettes heading West.

On the afternoon of the 1 March battleship WARSPITE, two auxiliary carriers and two cruisers of the DELHI class were sighted lying in Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio traffic the convoy UGS 33 is suspected to be destined to Naples-Nettunia, parts of the convoy ZMS 42 are sailing to Nettunia, Naples and Corsica.

On the morning of the 1 March strong increasing number of small merchantmen was sighted in the harbor of Ajaccio according to photograph spotting eleven freighters with altogether 20,000 BRT were counted. On the morning of the 2 March one destroyer was sailing off the Bonifacio Straits. Off Anzio a patrol-line of six destroyers and one escort vessel were recognized. In the entrance of the port of Anzio one ship was sunk by our own 17 cm army battery. On the afternoon of the 1 March two destroyers and two merchantmen were sighted off Vieste at the eastern coast heading southward. At 0745 on the 2 March a convoy of 18 merchantmen of medium tonnage with four escort vessels was sailing between Malta and Bengasi, steering east.

Following a report of the intelligence division submitted to the Panzer Army High Command 2 in South Italy, the Anglo-Americans are spreading news, whereafter landing operations on the Dalmatian coast in the nearest time are fast approaching. The Panzer Army High Command 2 is supposing that outflanking landing manoeuvres are to be carried out north of Pescara in order to move up the front of the 8th Army, to discharge the Nettunia-bridgehead and to contain further German troops.

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Own Situation:

During the night of the 1 March the operation NUSSKNACKER was carried out by two TA-boats. The harbor of Bastia was shelled with good effect. Torpedoes fired by PT-boats were avoided.

Two harbor defense boats executed the mining operation ULME 1 southeast of Ravenna as planned.

At 0130 one of our own convoys was attacked by enemy PT-boats with four torpedoes without yielding any effect 15 miles south of Leghorn. Our own minesweepers passed this same area without engagement. The Radar location post Leghorn and the harbor of Anzio were raided by enemy planes. The anti aircraft protection of Talamone was handed over to mobile naval anti aircraft groups with five guns. Genoa and Spezia were exhorted to strike by fly-sheets. Incidents were prevented by early counter measures.

During the night of 2 March one operation with PT-boats in the area of the beachhead is planned.

Escort duties and patrol service is developed to full scale.

Submarine U "616 probably has sunk one destroyer in C I 5955 with Zaunkoenig torpedo.

The Commander Submarines Mediterranean reports his plan to direct the Submarine U "343" to leave Toulon on the 4 March to the eastern Mediterranean. As being the 5th boat within the area of the enemy beachhead the operation with U "371" is planned.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 29 March two ship targets were located off Durazzo.

Own Situation:

On the 1 March torpedo-boat TA 36 entered Trieste with damaged boilers and the submarine chaser "205" entered without damage. Torpedoboat TA "37" entered Pola seriously damaged. According to the report of the Commander 11th Escort Flotilla the submarine chaser "201" probably was

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torpedoed. Nothing can be said of the 110 crew members, there are no news available. Slight casualties were caused by the sinking of steamer DIETRICHSEN.

On the 2 March one Siebel-ferry was shot afire during the air raid on Trogir. One harbor defence vessel had casualties. On the 28 February the steamer JADRAN (5450 BRT) sank in Dubrovnik due to bomb hit. The ship was there for repair.

b. Aegean.

Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon three submarines were recognized two to three miles off Tigani with NE-course. On the evening of the 1 March one enemy plane was shot down over Milos by antiaircraft artillery.

Own Situation:

Additionally is reported that in Amorgos one motor sailing ship was sunk on the 25 February by enemy plane. According to Greece statements another seven motor sailing ships are to be sunk. Another report without date speaks of the sinking of four motor sailing ships in Nios by enemy planes.

c. Black Sea.

Enemy Situation:

At 1942 on the 1 March the cruiser WOROSCHILOW was located in the area of Poti. During the day extremely busy traffic of small vessels and PT boats on the whole Caucasian coast was detected by radio intelligence. The movements in the evening and during the night probably served for changes of bases and exercises.

In the southern part of the Caucasian coast five PT-boats were recognized and in the northern part one boat.

Own Situation:

Kamysch Burun was shelled on the morning of the 1 March and 2 March. The place was attacked by 14 enemy planes on the afternoon of the 1 March

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without damage. On the morning of the 2 March ten enemy planes attacked Iwanbaba with bombs and gunfire. Our own PT-boats remained undamaged.

Submarine U "20" left Sevastopol in the afternoon. The PT-boats S "28" and S "40" transferred from Constanta to Iwanbaba.

During the night of 2 March the patrol line in the Kerch-Straits was occupied by three naval landingcraft.

Off St. George submarine-chaser "2301" run aground.

The Crimea convoys were carried out without particular events.

Again the Danube-River has been released for shipping.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

The Finnish press and publicity represents nearly without exception the opinion, that the Russian conditions in the shape submitted were unacceptable. But a new judgment of the leading social-democratic newspaper is not mentioned.

Conference on the Situation with Chief of Staff of Naval Staff:

I. The Chief of Naval Communications asks for support from the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff to the Chief of General Staff of the Air Force in reference to the distribution of the first produced 100 Berlin sets, which in total were totally claimed from the German Air Force.

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff orders submission of corresponding telegram to the Chief of General Staff of the Air Force.

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In a highly restricted circle:

II. Army Situation:

Own successes in defence were reported on the large scale fightings in the area of Bobruisk, Vitebsk and Nevel. The situation on the Narwa/front is difficult because of own feeble strength.

III. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

The Liaison Officer attached to the Finnish Air Force reports that the attempts to reach a favorable peace were continued, although the present conditions are unacceptable. The total average through the reports submitted by various sources creates an unscrutable and confused picture of the situation.

Special Items:

I. Operation "Tanne".

a. The Operations Div./Naval Staff transmits the following judgment of the political situation in Finland to the Commander in Chief, Navy via Commander Submarines West:

1. "Now too the Finnish News Agency announced officially the conditions of Moscow for armistice. The Finns thereby emphasize that up to now no kind of official peace negotiations did occur.

2. The German Liaison Officer attached to the Finnish Air Force reports: Chief of Foreign Office Department in the Finnish General Headquarters does not believe in possibilities of a separate peace. Future development will depend upon the fact which guarantees Germany would have to offer for successful continuation of war.

3. The Chief of the Intelligence Center Finland reports:

Following words of Colonel Paasonen of the Finnish Headquarter, the army and large parts of the Finnish people consent to the continuation of war.

But a stronger political group is trying by all methods to reach a somewhat suitable peace. In event of evacuation of the Baltic States, especially of Esthonia no guaranty for political evolution in Finland can be assumed. A German declaration, issued in this sense would give the Finnish War a favorable turn. The declaration was issued with full agreement of Marshal Mannerheim. One is expecting changes in German policy toward the Baltic States.

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4. On Wednesday the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs declared to the German Ambassador that owing to German withdrawal movements the Finnish Front would be incapable to hold any longer. It may be possible that thereby eventual Finnish withdrawal to the borderline of 1940 was to be suggested and sustained."

b. Directive of 1/SKL I op 676/44 Gkdos Chefsache for the operation "Tanne" see War Diary Part C Volume III.

The keyword "Tanne" will be ordered by the Armed Forces High Command. The Naval Command East sets up the operational plan and reports its plans for execution, as soon as possible.

To keep the secret, all measures so far as they must be announced to the troops are to be camouflaged in the sense of preparation for short termed transfer to the Army Group North. The real purpose of the measures only is allowed to be known by a very small circle of persons, whose names must be settled by the High Command, in the Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas only to the Chief and one expert. It is prohibited to issue written orders or directives containing the actual plans beyond the Army High Command or Command Headquarters equally to right.

Forward condensed account in advance by telegram to the Naval Command East. Copy referring to 1/SKL I op 676/44 Gkdos Chefsache in War Diary Part C Volume III. It reads:

"A. Task: Surprising occupation. Achievements with keyword "Tanne".

B. Leading orders: Operational conduction by the Naval Command East to which will be placed at disposal:

1. For conduction of the landing squadrons: Commanding Admiral Training Units.

2. For execution of the landing on behalf of the army: The Commander of the 416th Infantry Division.

3. For planning, preparation and execution of the defense of the island:

The Naval Shore Commander (will be newly established) and the Commander of the 416th Infantry Division.

C. Participating Forces see B. Nr. 1 SKL I op. 65 2/44 Gkdos Chefsache.

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D. Execution:

1. Preparing measures: The Commanding General Armed Forces, Norway, Denmark and the Commander in Chief, Air Force are requested for urgent selection of troops and for disposing them for embarkation:

- a. Forces from Norway in the area of Oslo,
- b. 416th Infantry Division in the area of Aarhus,
- c. Combined Antiaircraft artillery detachment in the area of Danzig,
- d. Disposition of Staff and one battery of a Naval Artillery Detachment (from the Dutch area) also in the area of Danzig. Naval Shore Commander to the initiative of the Naval Command East.

II. Transfer and landing:

a. Decisive for landing are the military conditions being at hand. It is desirable to land surprisingly quick with considerable strong forces. Rough guide for timing of the transport echelons:

1. Echelon: Three ships, thereof two to M. one to E., D-day morning in the port of destination.
2. Echelon: Equal to 1st echelon, D-day / 1 day morning in the port of destination.
3. Echelon: Four ships, both two to M and E, D-day / 2 day morning in the port of destination.
4. Echelon: Equal to 1st Echelon, D-day / 6 day morning in the port of destination a.s.o.

b. Space of transportation: Execute planning in co-operation with the Shipping and Transportation Branch. The Shipping and Transportation Branch is planning to prepare for ten troop transports. Concentrate about twelve naval landingcraft at right time in the area of the Baltic for unloading. As difficulties due to ice may arise, dispose for ice-breakers and attach them to the transport squadrons.

III. Escort:

a. Units of the Commanding Admiral Defenses East and of the Commander/Minesweepers/East, heavy cruisers PRINZ EUGEN, SCHEER, Group Kothe, and if required in coordination with the Naval Staff the 2nd and 3rd Torpedoboat Flotilla.

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b. The Commander in Chief, Air Force is requested for close protection, fighter escort and support of landing troops in case of resistance.

E. Regulations for communications settles the Naval Command East.

F. Report plans as soon as possible. Thereby submit:

- a. Timetable for transport echelons and planned escort,
- b. Plannings for tactical execution of landing,
- c. First planning for defense of the isle."

c. The following directive of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, which was transmitted on the 26 Feb to the Commanding Generals Armed Forces Norway and Denmark only arrived at the Naval Staff on the 3 March (added by hand: fault of the Armed Forces High Command).

"1. Development of the situation may oblige in every time to withdraw forces for short time and unforeseen events in the East, especially for defense of surprising Russian landing operations on the coasts within the area of Army Group North.

2. The Commanding Generals Armed Forces Norway and Denmark provide for that task the following formations and units let them stay in their present task and prepare them, so that they may be evacuated in shortest time by rail or ship.

a. Commanding General Armed Forces Denmark:

416th Infantry Division (without East Battalion).

b. Commanding General Armed Forces Norway: four army coastal batteries (thereof two batteries 10.5 cm guns (Field) and two batteries 15.5 cm guns (Field) (mounted on wheel trails), one fortress engineer staff, one fortress engineer battalion, one rock-drilling company, personnel for manning four coastal batteries. The detachments are to withdraw mostly from South Norway. The Commanding General Armed Forces Norway reports, which units are provided for detailing.

3. The units to be called off by the key-word "Tanne".

4. Commanding General Armed Forces Denmark and Commanding General Armed Forces Norway report to Armed Forces High Command the shortest amount of time from the moment of issuing the keyword until the beginning of the evacuation.

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Thereby must provide:

- a. Commanding General Armed Forces Norway: transportation by ship from Oslo respectively ports of Southern Norway.
- b. Commanding General Armed Forces Denmark: transportation by railway from North Jutland or transportation by ship from Aalborg (report the time needed for both).

5. Application of transportation for ship and railway-transloading of the called formations are to submit immediately to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff/Home Staff Overseas Branch by the Commanding Generals Armed Forces Denmark and Norway."

The Naval Staff informs the Naval Command East, with copy to the Group North/Fleet with the following appendix:

- "1. Port of embarkation for the 416th Infantry Division not Aalborg but Aarhus.
2. The same regulation may be counted on the concentration of naval and Air Force forces.
3. Change of the directive 1/SKL I op. 675/44 Chefsache cypher E 1. will follow."

Adequate alterations of the directive from the 2 March have been sent to their addressees with the draught 1 SKL I op. 687.689 respectively 692/44 Gkdos Chefsache. Copies in War Diary Part C Volume III.

d. A. For the isles of Aland and Hochland the Naval Staff orders the following organization:

1. Aland Islands

- a. Naval Shore Commander with task forces
(Command No. 7000)
- b. One Naval Port Commander each for Mariehamn and Eckero (No. 7001 and 7002)
- c. Four harbor guard detachments for anchorages
(No. 7003 to 7006)
- d. One coastal Defence Flotilla (7007) concentrating of eight auxiliary minesweepers and six patrol boats from the area of the Commander (Minesweepers) East or the Commanding Admiral Defences East. There are planned six patrol-boat companies for disposal of material probably found on the Aland Islands; afterwards withdrawal of the above mentioned patrol/boats.

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e. Naval Artillery Detachment 629(7008) by new establishment of Staff and concentration of batteries with personnel and materiel inclusive air raid protection of the detachment. Hereto there will be attached eight army coastal batteries. Order referring the disposal of the naval batteries will follow separately.

f. One Naval Communications Officer with two Naval Teleprinter Stations and six Naval Signal Stations (No. 7009).

g. One Naval fitting-out Depot (No. 7010).

h. One Ordnance Command (7011).

i. One Administration and Supply Depot (No. 7012).

k. One Establishment of Naval Pilotage and Seamarks Authority (No. 7013).

l. Extended sick-quarters at the Naval Artillery-Detachment 629 (No. 7008 a).

2. Hogland

a. One Naval Port Commander (No. 7014)

b. One Naval Teleprinter Station and two Naval Signal Stations (No. 7014 a)

3. As per OKM 1 SKL I op. 675 from the 3 March 1944

E) 2) c), prepare the requested 12 naval landing craft from the 13th Landing Craft Flotilla. Further facts by the High Command, Navy, Naval Staff Quartermaster Division, General Section. The Admiral Landing Craft and Bases will be informed from this plan.

B. Subordination to 1 a) : Naval Command East
to 1 b),d),e) and f): Naval Shore Commander
to 1 g) up to k) as to military matters : Naval Shore Commander
as to professional matters ref. to special order
to 1 c) : Naval Port Commander
to 1 l) enclosed to Naval Artillery Detachment
to 2 a) : Admiral Baltic Countries or Naval Shore Commander
Estonia.
to 2 b) : enclosed to Naval Port Commander.

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C. Assembling Area: for 1 a) up to c) 1 e) (Staff only) up to f) area of Danzig

for 1 d), 2a) up to b) referring to decision of Naval Command East.

For forming up Head Quarters referring to 1e) (batteries) and 1 g) up to 1) orders will follow by the High Command Navy, further for all Commands directives on personnel matters.

D. Use until decamouflage the declaration of cyphers only for the above mentioned Commands, as f.e. "Command 7014" instead of "Naval Shore Commander Hogland".

E. The Naval Command has to establish and report readiness for transport in the assembling area with the highest speed.

F. Registration of transportation (numbers of men, weights, weapons and equipment) to Home Staff Overseas Branch, with copy to the High Command Navy Shipping and Transport Branch by Naval Command East, Naval Shore Commander, Naval Port Commanders and Communication Units are to place into the first wave because of their tasks in landing operation.

G. The Commander of 416th Infantry Division will be responsible for defense of the island as Fortress Commander Aland-Islands. Authorizations of the Fortress Commandant towards the Naval Shore Commander will only be in questions of fighting for the coast referring to Fuehrer directive 40.

H. With reference to keyword, camouflage and keeping the secret see as per High Command Navy 1 SKL I op 675 Gkdos Chefsache from the 3 March 1944.

e. In the course of preparations for "Tanne" the Naval Command East requests for detaching the Naval Shore Commander to the Naval Command East in Kiel as soon as possible. Assembling of Staff is planned in Danzig. Besides this, the Naval Command East asks for records of fortifications, coastal and anti-aircraft defense of the Aland Islands, strength of forces and so on, further for completion of the navigational aids of approach routes of the ports in question. Also the Naval Command East applies for immediate allotment of 12 naval landing craft because the artillery ferry barges would be unsuitable for unloading, further allotment of the 2nd and 3rd Torpedo/boat Flotilla with at least six boats. Adequate draught 1 SKL 690/44 Gkdos Chefsache see War Diary Part C Volume III.

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II. The Commander Submarines Mediterranean receives the directive from the Naval Staff, that the reinforcement of the boats in the eastern Mediterranean ordered on the 10 Jan became less urgent, as probably the enemy suspended transportation of war materiel to Turkey.

But the directive concerning the fighting of enemy landing operations in the Thyrreanean Sea will remain effective. Therefore no boats are to be transferred to the East at this time.

III. The Commander in Chief, Navy, after having heard the lecture of Quartermaster General Submarines decided that construction of shelters east of Salonika has been suspended. As provisional precaution the protection of the ship installations was ordered to be made with concrete blocks and coverings available, which may offer protection for the repair of 12 boats type XXIII and unprotected repair of six boats. Besides this, gallery-driving with three halls for six type VIIc boats respectively XXI was ordered.

For this scheme of construction amount of transportation was estimated to three trains per month. As soon as requirements of building materials will be covered, the supply for Volos has to begin.

IV. The Quartermaster Division decided that the last four Italian torpedo-boat new constructions 735 - 738 which were not ordered up till now are to be built. The motor mine sweepers RD "106," "107" and "108" are to be built too.

The German Naval Command Italy reports that the date of completion of these four torpedoboats will be in the beginning of 1945 in case that building-material will arrive in time. The required material for three motor minesweepers is at hand up to 10% while the remaining 90% will be delivered in two months.

V. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy informs the Commander in Chief, Navy via Commander Submarines West on the situation as follows:

"1. Mainland Situation East nothing to report. Situation Italy main front, all quiet. At present no effective own attack on Nettuno is hardly to be estimated. Partial operation is still planned in future. All must be tried to narrow battle conditions for the enemy. Thereby the struggle against the reinforcement of forces and supply as well as the

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gunfire on the landing places will arise to decisive importance. Again, am proposing examination of submarine concentration on this task. Am asking for order, if changes of present Fuehrer-directive will be desired.

2. The development of Sea Transport Situation in Norway, especially the situation on supplies for northern Norway in regard to the high losses of ships in the last time because of enemy activity and sea accidents is creating serious trouble. Increasing enemy activity may also be expected in this area.

3. The Fuehrer uttered his doubts concerning the evidently very weak fortification on the mainland side of Brest. Am proposing adequate collection of evidences on this journey.

4. Today, I heard, that battle-suited emplacement of new naval-batteries south of the Gironde previously may only be accomplished in four weeks. This date seems to be too late with regard to the enemy planning. May the time not be advanced? Up to now Fuehrer counted on the middle of March.

5. Finland's attitude still unsolved.

Today, the Foreign Office is looking at the situation more positively, but the Fuehrer remains sceptical now as ever, as the military officials resigned the decision in far extend to parliament. Therefore most careful observation and focusing to all possibilities on behalf of ourselves.

VI. On the 1 March the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff announced the Enemy Report on the situation No. 5/44. Copy in War Diary special filing: "Report on enemy situation, Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff."

In condensation of all former reports, essentially coming from only two well judged sources of the counter intelligence on the development of a large reserve of tonnage space created step by step in the area of Great-Britain, the following total impression is turning out:

The laying up of ships begun in autumn 1943 in the fiords of north-western Scotland; from here parts were advanced at first to the South during the last months under continuous replacement of the original ship assemblies while a diminution was also reported since the beginning of Feb. 1 via the northern coast of Eastern Scotland, which is said to have led to a quick assembly of essential tonnage space in this area. Regarding, that the total reserve may have the following extent:

South and Southwest-England	ca. 700,000 B RT
Irish Sea	ca. 500,000 B RT

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Scottish West Coast	ca. 350,000 B RT
Scottish East Coast	ca. 700,000 B RT

Up to now no verification of this assembly by our own air reconnaissance was stated, because these areas in question were not spotted. The transfers to the Scottish east-coast is pointing to enemy planning against the Scandinavian area, but at first adequate strong army formations are missing in the Scottish area following an information of the General Staff of the Army. The focal point of the enemy invasion army is lying now as ever clearly in South and Southwest-England.

Introduction of shipping space and reduction passing through Gibraltar Straits showed nothing surprising except of one returning convoy of materiel passing through Gibraltar Straits on the 26 February to USA, which consisted of 99 freighters and was extraordinary strong.

The stock of troop transports in the Mediterranean after being temporary reduced was filled up by new introduction of two scheduled troop convoys (estimated introduction of 50,000 men) to again 8 - 900,000 BRT. The next convoy of troops from Great Britain can be expected in the second part of the March and from the USA for the end of April to the beginning of May. The special service tonnage space being in action in the beach-head of Nettuno will at present be estimated up to 30 LST and 50 LCT, thus being half of the original effort. There is no clear meaning of the remaining special landing craft's distribution and places in the Mediterranean.

Concerning Merchant Warfare:

A. New Construction:

1. Generalities:

No new knowledge in ship constructions of Great Britain and Canada were submitted. Admiral Land Head of the Bureau of Ships (USMC) declared, that as to the American point of view one is unsatisfied on behalf of the production of new constructions in the month of January. The total sum of launches for all types of ships (small vessels also) amounted to 124 ships in January in contrary to 208 vessels in December. In February ostensibly 141 ships of all types had been launched.

Probably the commissioning of the new "VICTORY"-ship is expected in March. In January, it is said that 23 special types of ships for military purposes have been delivered within the bounds of the merchantmen building program. It is not known, if these were large landing craft, troop transports, auxiliary aircraft-carrier or large tankers, equipped with a flying deck.

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2. Monthly deliveries.

In regard to the remarkable set back in the production of USA new construction the total enemy deliveries of large merchantmen in the month of February may be estimated to 0.9 millions of BRT.

B. Sinkings:

Following an examination, the following enemy tonnage or tonnage running in charter for the enemy was lost in February: 142000 BRT (without Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Caspian Sea). Hereoff 10% are running on the part of the Italian Theater respectively the Mediterranean. Since the 1 January 1944 104 ships with 527,000 BRT were damaged. The total losses since the beginning of the war come to 30.6 millions BRT (without Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Caspian Sea), the total of new constructions to 26 millions BRT.

C. Stock

The total stock of shipstonnage beyond 1000 BRT being at disposal for the enemy powers is supposed to be about 39.7 millions BRT on 1 March 1944.

After reduction of the tonnage being busy in coastal shipping and in repair, there will remain approximately 33.7 millions BRT for military and civil supply purposes. There off the operational freight space amounts to 23.6 millions BRT.

D. Operational Tonnage.

The former requirement of tonnage space for military and civil demands in the supply shipping was judged to be approximately 17 millions BRT in the beginning of 1944. Under present conditions there must be supposed that especially the requirement for military purposes of supplies has been increased and the total requirement amounts at present to approximately 18 millions BRT.

The raising number is created by

1. increased shipping in the traffic with Great Britain/Murmansk/Archangelsk;

2. increased requirements on supplies for new USA-troop contingents in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

3. increased fighting activity of the USA-troops in the southwestern Pacific (a judgment of this theater may be particularly difficult because of the lack of any insight into matters.)

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At present, the free freight tonnage for new military operations amounts therefore to about 5.5 millions BRT, off which according to unconfirmed reports one part may be found in Great Britain, as fleet being in reserve and on the east coast of USA.

Situation 3 March 1944:

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

Owing to disturbed communications no reports were submitted from the air operations of the 15th and 19th Group. Eight locations were reported in the rendezvous area.

At 1547 air reconnaissance reported one LST south of Plymouth, heading east.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept off La Pallice. Two submarines were escorted in going out and one submarine was escorted entering.

The convoy BROMBERG was postponed to a period of dark nights.

Channel Area:

During the night of 2 March the torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla in Lyme/Bay did not succeed. On their way back the boats were attacked by two planes without effect. Preliminary report see Radiogram 0808. Brief report see Radiogram 1415.

Proceeding from Boulogne to Dunkerque, five boats of the 18th Patrol/boat Flotilla were attacked by two enemy fighter bombers north of Calais.

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Without yielding any results, the attack was frustrated by defensive fire.

The Group West put up its attitude to the battle report of the 4th Torpedo boat Flotilla (see War Diary 2 March). It agrees with the opinion of the Flotilla referring to the special suitability of the torpedo boats 35 - 37 in similar situations for torpedo operations, but is pointing out, that the convoy escort really may be suitable in cooperation with torpedo boats equipped with strong artillery, so that the torpedo boats 35 - 37 may be appreciated as additional group of torpedo carriers. The suggestion of the Group was made with the reason to prevent that in event of presumable new detaching of more torpedo/boats 35 - 37 for the West Area an exchange with boats of the "WOLF" - "MOEVE" class, the torpedo/boats 39 or even destroyers may be done. Copy of this assessment see Radiogram 1940.

Special Items:

1. The Group West transmits a judgment of the Commanding General Armed Forces West in reference to the directive of the Commander in Chief, Navy, referring to the inclusion of task, - instruction, - training units and schools of the occupied areas into the Naval Emergency units, (see War Diary 29 February) which was conveyed to the Armed Forces High Command. In event of battle the Commanding General Armed Forces West has the opinion that, when threatening danger may appear and the decisive fighting for the coast may begin, the last man has to fight for the task which seems to be necessary to the Commanding General Armed Forces, West. As to this moment, the decision of war is at stake, it should be no doubt upon the fact, that all other things are depending on this decision. If therefore other arguments are playing any part in this moment, belongs to the decision of the Armed Forces High Command. Any substitute of these naval forces cannot be raised by the Commanding General Armed Forces West. Copy of the telegram as per 1 SKL 6714/44 Gkrios in War Diary Part C Volume IIb.

2. From the monthly report of the Group West on escort-duties in February 1944:

Including the traffic to the Channel-Islands 176 vessels with 122500 BRT were escorted in Channel. In nine airraids two planes were shot down. In four attacks of naval forces one PT-boat is suspected to be sunk, three were damaged, 19 mines were swept. 14 men were killed in action and 54 were wounded.

In the Gulf of Biscay 196 vessels with 147,000 BRT were escorted. 50,200 tons of ore were imported from Spain.

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In 11 air raids one plane was shot down. 48 mines were swept, 30 submarines entering and 50 submarines outgoing were escorted.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

At forenoon strong enemy squadrons penetrated into the Heligoland Bight. Ten or fifteen high explosives were dropped on the shipyard of Wilhelmshaven, inflicting only slight damage; 24 bombs were dropped on Heligoland. Numerous bombs were thrown into the water in emergency salvo release around Heligoland. More bombing was reported from the area of Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven. Naval antiaircraft artillery shot down five planes.

Owing to stormy weather conditions escort, minesweeping and patrol duties were suspended.

In the Zealand Waters five convoys with 54,196 BRT were executed.

Special Items

From the monthly report of the Commanding Admiral Defenses North in February 1944:

1008 ships with 1290 130 BRT were escorted, thereof in Rotterdam-traffic 62 ships with 140,705 BRT, in Ems-Esbjerg convoys 173 ships with 347,303 BRT.

The losses amounted to: one Dutch steamer of 1402 BRT run aground, one German buoy-laying ship and one Danish fishing smack due to mine-hit; furthermore as to warships minesweeper M "3411" and patrol boat VP "1309" by collision, one motor minesweeper and one rescue launch of the Air Force by enemy air activity.

The Navy lost ten men killed in action and eight men missing, the merchant marine suffered ten men missing.

In 14 enemy air raids three planes were shot down, during two PT-boats engagements three PT-boats were sunk. In total 124 ground mines were swept.

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Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group seven planes were detected over the Central North Sea. On the 2 March our own air reconnaissance sighted 13 mostly smaller vessels in the harbor of Yokonga.

2. Own Situation:

At 1002, one eastbound convoy was attacked by 17 enemy fighter and torpedo planes, southwest of Vardoe without effect. The 61st Patrolboat Flotilla reports of two planes shot down by escort forces. Battle brief report see radiogram 2315. The Air Force succeeded in shooting down three planes by own fighters. At 0940 the troop transport LEVANTE north-bound sailing in convoy was attacked by enemy submarine with four torpedoes off Bodoe yielding no result. Submarine hunt is launched, shipping is stopped. Towards noon the towed steamer RUDESHEIMER came in distress owing to breaking hawser off Bessacker. Rescue work is started.

Thirty-one northbound and 30 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring located nine vessels at sea in the Gulf of Finland on the 2 March.

2. Own Situation:

Twenty-one boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances and four minesweeping planes and in the remaining Baltic Sea 18 boats were engaged in minesweeping. Operations of the 3rd Escort Flotilla were abandoned, due to bad weather conditions. One ELM/A mine was swept off Aarhus. According to report of the Naval Attaché Stockholm, the Swedish steamer SVANEN struck a mine at 0045 five miles south of Cape Kullen.

Convoy shipping went on as planned without particular events. The mine-layers LINZ and BRUMMER are transferring from Kiel to Kopenhagen.

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The boats B "6," "35" and WF "119" arrived at Neufahrwasser and proceeded to the East at 1800. The AF "30," "31," "32," "36" and "50" are lying in Libau, AF "29" and "35" in Memel, AF "37" in Stettin. AF "2," "5," "9" and "49" in Kiel.

The 1st Minesweeping Flotilla and three boats of the 25th Minesweeping Flotilla did minesweeping north Juminda.

Situation on the Mainland.

In the section of Hungerburg the battery Merekuella shelled target areas on the eastern banks of Narva River opposite Hungerburg with harassing fire.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

At 1755 Colombo transmits SSS-Report of a British steamer, which was torpedoed in LC 9919. Cleethorpes repeated the SSS-report of an unknown USA steamer, which reported to have sighted a submarine in BB 8690 at 1300.

Own Situation:

Submarine U "621" will operate off North-Minch. This area was not occupied since two years, therefore surprising effect may be reached. Furthermore no particular reports are submitted.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area.

During the day there were busy penetrations into the occupied zones, especially into Belgium/Northern France. About 700 bombers were reported to have penetrated with strong fighter escort into the area of Paris and attached airfields. Partially essential damage was inflicted. During the night of 2 March the BMW-plants and the works of Les Mureaux situated south of Paris were seriously damaged.

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During the night of 3 March airfields were attacked in Northern France and Belgium and minelaying was suspected to be carried out off the western coast. In the area of Orleans Lyon 80 planes were observed, which probably might have dropped agents.

No particular operations during the night.

Reich Territory:

In forenoon strong fighter formations flew in extended formation over the West-Frisian Islands and Hook van Holland - Braunschweig into the area of Stendal-Brandenburg-Magdeburg. Isolated planes even advanced to Berlin. Lateron rallying formations currently penetrated into the area of the Zuider Zee. At 1150 Wilhelmshaven was raided, where three waves of bombs were dropped on screen targets, of which one dropped into the water, another dropped in the outskirts of town and one hit the town itself. Owing to bad weather conditions the attack was not carried out as planned. Two hundred and thirty two of our own fighters operated in defense. Results so far not reported. More enemy formations penetrated into Western Germany. No raids were reported. During the night of 3 March ten Mosquito planes advanced into the area of Berlin. Another ten planes dropped bombs in the Rhenian-Westfalian industrial district.

Mediterranean Theater:

In the front area, on the 2 March, the enemy concentrated all forces which were available in the battle field of the beachhead on attacks against our own artillery and antiaircraft artillery emplacements in the area of Littorio. Altogether about 1200 enemy planes were detected. Antiaircraft artillery shot down four planes. For the rest isolated fighterbomber attacks were carried out in the Italian area and on the Dalmatian and Albanian coast. The enemy reconnaissance activity over the Aegean was very weak. On the evening of the 2 March some of our own bombers probably sunk one destroyer and a steamer in the harbor of Anzio. During another operation carried out by 60 bombers, one destroyer was damaged. In the main, ground targets were attacked. Three Ju 88 were lost. At 0800 our own reconnaissance located a large-scale convoy consisting of 80 steamers in the Bight of Oran steering east and a smaller convoy north of Tobruk on south-eastern course.

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Eastern Area:

On the eastern front 824 of our own and 433 enemy missions were counted during the 2 March. Seven of our own and 24 enemy planes were lost.

On the 2 March two ferries were sunk in the Kerch-Straits.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Except the cruiser of the "CAIRO"-class another DELHI-class cruiser left Gibraltar eastbound on the 2 March. The leaving of the auxiliary aircraft carrier from the harbor was reported.

For a new time, Tres Forcas reported the UGS 33. Our own air reconnaissance reported on four cargo and passenger steamers, eight freighters about 50 landing craft and sloops as well as one destroyer, probably EPERVIER in Mers el Kebir, in Oran one cruiser, two submarines, one transport, 28 freighters and two tankers; in Arzeu eight freighters, one passenger steamer and one destroyer.

Own Situation:

In Toulon and St. Tropez both, one auxiliary submarine chasing division consisting of five harbor defense boats each was established, which are subordinated to the 6th Escorting Flotilla.

Three vessels with 900 BRT were escorted by eight escort-vessels off the French South-coast.

In February altogether 36 vessels with 79,000 BRT were escorted off the French south-coast. Without escort seven Red-Cross steamers entered and six left Marseille. Besides this, another 36 steamers entered and left Marseille. In two air raids, four planes were shot down and six submarine attacks were reported on convoys. Six of our own Submarines going out and ten entering were escorted. Our own escorting forces sustained the loss of ten men who were killed in action and 42 wounded.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

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Enemy Situation:

During the night of 2 March our own planes detected only destroyer patrols off the beachhead of Nettunia, but no freighter transports. On the afternoon of the 2 March no shipping has been observed in Salerno-Bay and in the Gulf of Gaeta. Air reconnaissance on the morning of the 3 March did not sight anything on the eastern coast of Sardinia and Corsica and in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea. The air reconnaissance was not complete.

At 0915 on the 3 March two landing boats were sailing ten miles south of Nettunia with NE-course and at 1200 one cruiser was sailing one mile WSW of Anzio. North of Ponza one destroyer and two patrol boats were sighted.

Forenoon reconnaissance on the 2 March recognized one torpedo boat on the Italian east-coast 70 miles east of Cape Gargano and 29 sailing ships off Ortona. Following Intelligence report, one higher ranking USA-officer, who has been in London, said that from the concentration of British and American troops in Bastia and other towns of Corsica the fact may be drawn that in the middle of March a landing operation on Elba and on the mainland between Civitavecchia and Piombino may be carried through. But the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff forwarded this report only under reservation and remarks that, according to statement of the General Staff of the Army there ought to be only two French divisions on Corsica.

Own Situation:

The operation of PT-boats off the beachhead during the night of 2 March yielded no effect. Two harbor defense boats carried out the minelaying operation "Loewenrachen" east of Benedetto as planned.

During a serious air raid on Stefano on the evening of the 2 March the approach roads to the harbor were damaged. Heavy antiaircraft artillery has arrived and was put into operation. On the afternoon of the 3 March Anzio was raided in low level attack. The steamer BOTIGLIERE caught fire.

In February a total of 26,244 tons was carried on the West coast and of 8062 tons on the east coast.

On the 4 March the Commander Submarines Mediterranean set out for six or seven days journey to Genoa, Spezia and Pola for inspections of bases.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

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On the 2 March five Spitfire attacked Tinad and inflicted only slight damage. In Zara the steamer LAGOSTA (180 BRT) sunk after being hit by bombs.

According to the preliminary deficiency of the transfer of steamers from the Adriatic to the Aegean, the Group South issued a directive to the Admiral Adriatic, saying that war-readiness of damaged torpedo-boats, motor mine sweepers and submarine chasers has to be restored quickly, as well as to complete the equipment and armament and to make ready more ships for war. Furthermore the training of all vessels is to be carried out under the direct influence of the Admiral Adriatic. In connection to the operation "Freischuetz" corvettes and motor mine sweepers are to be transferred to the Aegean. As to the PT-boats the directive of the 20 February is maintained, whereafter the Group places the Commander 1st PT-boat Division with all his boats under the command of Admiral Aegean or let him stay in the Adriatic referring to the concentration which may be located in each case, so far as the number of boats ready for war does not allow distribution to both the areas.

b. Aegean.

On the evening of the 2 March planes in low-level flight were observed over Milos, probably for minelaying. The Commander 9th Torpedo-boats Flotilla reports PT-boat attack off Rhodos in the evening. Further news are not yet reported. On the evening of the 2 March the tanker BERTA left Porto Lago under protection of two TA-boats in order to sail through Samos-Straits to the Dardanelles.

c. Black Sea.

Enemy Situation:

At 1630 one submerged submarine was sighted and attacked 12 miles SSE of Eupatoria by one of our own planes. Submarine hunt was started and will be continued by a submarine chasing group.

Own Situation:

In forenoon, Iwanbaba was attacked by 16 enemy planes. Damage was inflicted on PT-boat S "51" and "40."

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The escort-vessel which were stranded near Kilia was salvaged and entered. The net-tender ANTILOPE was towed off at St. George. For the rest no particular events.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Malakka-Straits.

Following a Reuter information a British submarine has torpedoed a Japanese aircraft carrier of about 7000 tons with two torpedoes in Malakka Straits, which was escorted by 5 submarine chasers. Another submarine scored a torpedo-hit on a supply ship.

Marshall-Islands.

On the 28 February Wake and Nauru were attacked by planes.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the situations with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.

I. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff describes it as very unsatisfactory, that at 0550 today the Qu P convoy could appear surprisingly in the submarines position in AC 4680 and orders examination if respectively why air reconnaissance was not carried out in eastern direction from where the Qu P was to be expected. Evidently the 5th Air Force reconnoitred for P Qu to the west. It will be necessary to ascertain if the Admiral Northern Waters made contact with the Headquarters of the Air Force. It would be quite impossible, that the enemy is passing close to the own coast.

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff is planning to confer with the Chief of the General Staff of the Air Force and investigate, if not air torpedo formations could be transferred to the northern area in order to fight the P Qu - convoys.

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II. According to report of the Quartermaster Division the heavy cruiser HIPPER will not be used for training of cadets in the time from 1 May - 1 November. Commissioning of the cruiser was planned on the 18 April and shipyards trial run for the 20 May. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff wants commissioning as fighting ship. The best possible, war readiness should be established from the date of 18 April.

III. Report of the Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff.

The Russians created two new badges for the Navy, which have been named after Zarian officers.

The affair Intelligence Service/SS has not been settled.

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff orders joint working by the Organization and Mobilization Branch and the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff.

In a highly restricted circle

IV. Further report of the Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff on the Finnish situation.

Following the utterance of the Finnish Secretary of State, the Reichstag approved the attempt to be made by the Government for attaining more favorable conditions in Moscow. According to information of the Finnish Liaison Officer the present conditions are not to discuss referring to the opinion of the Finnish Armed Forces. The inner danger, however, still has not been released. Evidently by order of Mannerheim, the colonel newly insisted upon the proposal, that Germany may announce a declaration of independence for the Baltic Countries.

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff orders information of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy.

V. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff agrees with the desire of the Army for disposition of 500 tons of high explosive on behalf of the Navy, which at present may be possible to fulfill.

VI. Report of the Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division/Naval Staff.

The Commander Submarines Mediterranean applied for transfer of the main concentration of Submarines operations from the area off the beachhead to the supply routes for Naples and Sicily Straits, where big targets are offered which do not sail to Nettuno. In contrary to that, the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South-West declared his desire in not changing the present position, all the more since a Radio location post will be established near Cape Circeo, which is able to support the work of the Submarines in the landing area.

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The opinion of the Naval Staff is, that some boats must be held in the area of Naples/Nettuno.

The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, Navy reported with date of the 3 March, that for the first time a thorough success of the Army operation in the landing area will not be expected no more. Therefore, it would be very important to fight the supply of the enemy to the beachhead.

The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff and the Commander in Chief, Navy will be informed on the situation of Submarine Warfare in the Mediterranean on the 1 March as follows:

1. 18 boats in the Mediterranean

2. There off four in the eastern Mediterranean, at present one each in the area of Cypros, on the coast of Cyrenaica and between the Straits of Otranto and the South point of Sicily. In short time the 4th boat will be ready to leave from Salamis.

3. In the Western Mediterranean there are four boats in the area of Nettuno-Naples. Further boats will be ready for war on 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, and 30 March. It is planned to operate with five boats at times between Naples and Nettuno; the remaining ones on the North-African coast.

4. Additional transfer of boats from the eastern to the West Area is unbearable for shipyards. Besides this, proceeding through Sicily Straits means the same risk as breaching the Straits of Gibraltar.

The final conclusion of the Commander in Chief Navy will be waited for.

Special Items

I. Operation "Tanne"

1. With regard of the directive from the Armed Forces High Command referring to the preparation of the occupation of Hochland Island (see War Diary 1 March) the uncleared fact appeared whether the 400 coastal gunners provided under cypher 4 may be detailed by the Army or Navy. On inquiry, the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, Navy answers, that the assembling of forces should be left to the General Staff of the Army in direct coordination with the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Commander in Chief, Air Force. For the next, it was not planned to think of occupation forces of the Navy. The Navy representative on the WFst expressed to the op. that the Navy has no forces available and asked for making direct contact with the General Staff of the Army.

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Thereupon, the Naval Staff asks for confirmation by the General Staff of the Army, that the occupation forces for Hochland were not to be detailed by the Navy., but the 400 coastal gunners were to be disposed by personnel of the army, as the Navy has no forces available.

2. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway reports that the forces which should be detached referring to the directive will be held in readiness in such a manner, that they will start from Oslo eight days after issuing the keyword "Tanne." Details in Copy see Radiogram as per to 1. SKL 688/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

3. The Naval Command East and North, Commanding Admiral Defences West and Commanding Admiral Defences East, Group North/Fleet receive the directive, that the beginning of the routine shipyard repair of the 21st Minesweeping Flotilla will be carried out as planned in the middle of March without any replacement of boats therefore falling out by Commanding Admiral Defences East and Commanding Admiral Defences West.

II. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff transmits:

The Fuehrer has ordered:

1. In the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces West the following Islands are forthwith declared as fortresses: the Channel Islands Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney.

2. The authorization of the fortress commander, the strength of the troops and the supply of the fortresses will be regulated according to the order OKW/WFST/Op No. 00606/44 GKdos from 19 January 1944. -

3. The following were appointed fortress commander:

Fortress Guernsey - Major General Graf von Schmettow. - Fortress Jersey - Colonel Heine. Fortress Alderney - Major Schwalm.

The Group West has been informed immediately by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West.

III. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy informs the Commander in Chief, Navy via Naval Group West of the situation as follows:

1. Situation on the Mainland:

Heavy enemy attack southeast of Vitebsk. Up to now repulsed until local penetrations. Particular point of pressure Narva - Front. Here strong Russian attacks must be suffered. New forces are coming. Further accentuation of situation possible.

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2. Nettuno:

The Fuehrer desires to empty all the possibilities for fighting the enemy and for weakening his positions in the beachhead. Question: Is the Navy able to help in anyway. The question of operation with long ranging naval batteries was negatively answered by myself up to this date, as this only may be possible by withdrawal from other important places. But nevertheless I propose relavent examination. Then I propose immediate examination of

a. possibility of action with remote controlled boats in cooperation with the regiment "Brandenburg" in purpose of actions against the ships in the landing areas;

b. possibility of operation with the group "Heye - Frauenheim."

3. Anew doubts of the Fuehrer referring to the defense of Brittan and Cherbourg-peninsula, where Fuehrer sees particular incitement for development of bridgehead and ordered checking for reinforcements of forces.

4. Referring to l SKL/I u 649/44 GKdos Most Secret Chefsache from 4 March the Submarine situation was reported to the Fuehrer. No objections. -

5. Some days ago, the Fuehrer uttered (not in connection with the Navy) he wanted, that in event of enemy landing operation each soldier and each man able for fighting in the occupied area has to be put into action with his weapon in hand for defense of enemy landing operations and protection regardless to other tasks and requirements of situation, as this defense will be decisive for war. Fuehrer not yet informed of the far carrying effect of the decision there made, referring to denial of creation of Naval emergency units by Operational- Instruction and Training Units. In regard to the objection of the Commanding General, Armed Forces West and the strong reaction to the achievement of protection will previously make necessary a newly information in the next days.

I for myself believe, that in time of need resorting to naval formations ashore can not be avoided.

IV. The Commanding Admiral of the German Naval Command Italy reports on the discussion with Admiral Sparzani, Marshal Graziani and the Duce effecting the organization of the Italian Navy. Adequate Radiograms as per l.SKL 6828/44 and 6829/44 GeKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

At first the Chief of Operations Div./Naval Staff and Commander in Chief, Navy have been informed via Group West with the contents of the telegram. Subject to judgment.

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V. The Quartermaster Division informed the Commander Submarines Mediterranean, that the erection of Submarine pens in Marseille meets difficulties. The planned construction of the dry dock in Toulon is difficult and on behalf the room not sufficient. In addition to that comes the lack of material and high amount of transportation. The High Command, Navy and the Organization Todt therefore is planning to check the possibility of tunnel construction instead of high pen construction in the Western Mediterranean. Possibility may be offered, as far as can be recognized, in the area between Nizza and Genoa.

The Operations Div. Naval Staff has no fundamental objections to transfer protected Submarine installations in this area. The investigation will be made by the High Command, Naval Shore Construction Division in close coordination with Commander Submarines Mediterranean. Further planning depends on the result of these checkings.

VI. On the 28 February the change of colors on the MARCO POLO II took place. The ceremony was accomplished in presence of the Vice-Admiral Abe and the Commanding Admiral Submarines in festival manner.

The naval Attaché Group reports of the clear distinction, that the Japanese from Admiral to the youngest sailor were honestly thankful for the training and personal taking care of them. The naval Attache Group has the opinion that the whole accomplishment of the "MARCO POLO II" program was handled by all official establishments of the Navy in such a manner that they left the best impression.

VIII. Summary of the enemy news, detected by radio decyphering and radio-monitoring in the time from 21 - 27 February are in the brief - report No. 9/44.

The report does not contain any particulars.

Situation 4 March 1944.

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

Enemy Situation:

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At the 15th Group were nine, at the 19th Group were 30 planes and in the Azores Squadrons one plane was located in action. Two British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

Following an Intelligence report the stock of shipping space reserve lying in West Scotland and in the Irish Sea was numbered on the 1 March with 500,000 BRT each. In southern and southwestern ports of Great Britain increasing number of tonnage is estimated from 700,000 BRT to about 900,000 BRT, in the eastern Scottish ports increasing number also from 700,000 BRT to nowadays 840,000 BRT. There may be added the Shetlands with 170,000 BRT and Scapa with 200,000 BRT. In Scapa obviously are lying eight auxiliary aircraft carriers.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff thinks this report with its desultory raising of detected shipping space to be a highly overcoloured view but believes, that the tendency of further transfer of shipping space to eastern Scotland may be right.

The presence of eight auxiliary aircraft carriers in the area of Scapa was deemed to be impossible.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff asks for urgent reconnaissance of the Scottish east coast as well as the Orkneys and Shetlands.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff informed the Groups, the Naval Commands, the German Naval Command Italy, further more the Headquarters of Services coming in question. Copy of the adequate draughts as per 1.SKL 6846/44 GeKados in War Diary Part D Volume Material on the enemy situation.

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast.

Owing to suspected minelaying and in regard to enemy air activity during the night of 3 March the Gironde up to Pauillac and Brest roads was closed. One entering Submarine was escorted.

Channel Area.

Owing to rough sea, minesweeping was broken off. Two patrol positions remained occupied.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

On the afternoon of the 3 March another enemy plane was shot down by the Naval anti-aircraft artillery Emden.

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In the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters three convoys with about 27000 BRT were carried out.

The convoy 485 Elbe-Hook with seven steamers was started at 2000.

Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Nine planes were detected being in action over the North Sea.

According to Radio Monitoring a Russian reconnaissance plane reported one of our own convoys in Breisund at 1505.

According to information of the Air Commander Atlantic Coast on evening 3 March the Qu P convoy left Kola Bay at this day regarding to air reconnaissance and statements of prisoners.

At 0550 the first Submarine report of sighting in AC 4680 was made. One destroyer, one carrier-borne aircraft and smoke was sighted. One destroyer has been sunk.

Following photograph spotting on the 3 March there were lying in Polennoye-harbor: one destroyer, six submarines and four small war vessels; in Murmansk: three destroyers, 39 steamers and one tanker. Ten standard freighters carried in total 37 small landing craft on deck. If this may be right, it would be the first statement of landing craft in this area.

Our own air reconnaissance detected the convoy at 0745 in AC 4633 with course 270° and ten miles speed.

Composition: one aircraft carrier, about 35 merchantmen, 20 escorting vessels with cruisers. Contact was made until 1632.

Own Situation:

During noontime nine enemy planes were reported in the area of Petsamo, and in the afternoon one plane was reported off Banak. One good preserved Russian submarine mine was cut east of Kirkenes. At 1548 submarine alarm was reported east of Vardoe. Submarine hunt was without effect. In the course of the day 39 enemy aircraft were recognized in the area of Vardoe.

The steamer "RIGA" (645 BRT) run aground off Kjelmoeey.

39 northbound and 20 southbound ships have been escorted.

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Submarine U "472," which at first reported the Qu-P convoy at 0555, reported to be attacked by shore-borne aircraft at 0647 and then as war distress report the sinking of the boat.

Checking, in which sea rescue aircraft also took part remained ineffective and was interrupted at 2000.

The Qu P convoy, which was detected in the northern part of the Submarine position, could not be fought because the Submarines were held submerged and three boats shared in the rescue-work for Submarine U "472." Owing to the situation of defense the Submarines received order to withdraw during the day and to advance for night attack. Contact with our own Air Force got lost at 1632. Making contact again with forces of the Air Commander Lofoten was impossible, owing to bad weather conditions. At 1800 the convoys' dead reckoning was worked out to prove right in AC 4437. Thirteen Submarines are now in operation after the loss of Submarine U "472," thereof six boats are sailing close to the enemy on the evening of the 4 March. Up to now one destroyer has been sunk and another is suspected to be.

Three boats leaving Hammerfest were attacked by torpedo-planes without effect. These boats are forming the Group Orkan.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Icing Situation:

In general, no essential increasing of ice in the Gulf of Finland is estimated, but with slightly raising frost and light winds packing together of floe ice into ice shelf may be probable in the northern and eastern Waters of the Gulf of Finland. More see Radiogram 0950.

Own Situation:

Twenty-seven vessels and three minesweeping planes in the Baltic-Sea Entrances and twenty five vessels and six minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping in the remaining Baltic. Off Cape Kullen the steamer DESDEMONA (1305 BRT) struck a mine and sunk. Between Schleimuede and Bokniseck mine detonation was observed. Off Neufahrwasser patrol boat VS "233" struck a mine and got totally lost.

In the Drodgen the steamer OLGA TRADER and the tanker NORDANBRIS run aground. Escort duties in the Baltic-Sea Entrances were partially

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delayed owing to foggy weather. LUEDERITZ entered Horten with six PT-boats. The net tenders "19" and "20" left Kiel with four boats bound for Baltish Port. West of Windau the steamer WESERWALD was attacked by torpedo-plane. The transfer of ferry barges to the East is making slight progress. Details see situation of the day.

In the situation on the mainland enemy attack in strength of battalion against the northern banks of Lake Peipus near Smolniza and strong enemy attack northwest of Putki was reported. The penetration could be blocked in southern direction. At the southwest and south edge of Lauka-swamp a switch line is being constructed.

The out-post position of the 18 Army is situated about eleven km east and north of PSKOV. From the Hungerburg-section gunfire by both sides was reported.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff reports on the Swedish shipyards and new construction of merchantmen as well as on reconstruction of the Spanish merchant marine. Summary "Foreign Merchant Shipping" No. 2/44, which equally contains the index of FH - reports issued since the 28 February 1942 is to find in War Diary Part C Volume XI as per 1 SKL 6848/44 Geheim.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

Enemy Situation:

Konavara transmitted submarine warning of the Sea Commander New Guinea in grid square TC 2023.

Own Situation:

From the Atlantic no particular reports were submitted.

The Japanese submarine KIEFER is going to enter on the 10 March as reported.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

West Area:

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In the occupied West Area busy flying activity coming from the North with fighter escort was reported, two enemy fighters approaching from the South into the area of Marseille were shot down by our own fighters, then doing exercises.

During the night of 4 March 40 enemy planes did minelaying in the harbor and roads of Brest.

Another numerous planes were observed in the area of St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, Dijon, Fécamp evidently in supplying agents.

Reich Territory:

In the morning hours isolated enemy reconnaissance planes were in the area of Frankfurt/Main, Cleve, Husum.

Towards noon many hundred planes penetrated in waves into the area of Cologne, Bonn, Duesseldorf and Hannover-Braunschweig where the masses returned. A small rest-part advanced to the area of Greater-Berlin and attacked at about 1330 the BMW-plant in Genshagen near Teltow, where only slight damage was inflicted. Up to now, there are still no reports of planes shot down by our own 300 fighters being in operation.

Airfields laying in the course of flight were dropped with several bombs. In Leverkusen and Duesseldorf industrial damage thereby was inflicted.

During the night of 4 March about 30 Mosquito planes were reported which carried out interceptor flights in the area of Greater-Berlin without bombing.

Mediterranean Theater.

On 3 March the focal point of the enemy operations with about 1200 enemy planes was in the area of the beachhead inclusive Rome and the area of Viterbo. Transport installations and ground defense works have been attacked. At nearly all marshalling yards of Rome essential damage and casualties were caused. Airfields were only slightly damaged. Our own fighters shot down 14 and antiaircraft artillery downed one enemy plane. On the 4 March our own air reconnaissance sighted five tankers, 40 merchantmen in Algiers-Bay, and off the Bay two corvettes and one destroyer.

North of Tobruk one big transport with two escort vessels was sighted heading East, north of Sidi Barani one suspected to be cruiser and two destroyers were simultaneously heading East.

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Eastern Area:

At the Eastern Front on the 3 March 744 own and 566 enemy missions were carried out. One of our own planes was lost, nine planes were shot down.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

The two groups of eleven respectively 14 freighters reported leaving Gibraltar on the 3 March, may probably have been the MKS 41. In addition is reported, that on the 2 March Dutch a damaged troop transport entered Gibraltar coming from the East.

On the 4 March two freighters, one corvette, one submarine and one escort vessel left Gibraltar East-bound.

Own Situation:

In the morning, submarine alarm was sounded off Cannes and in the afternoon off Toulon. Harbor defense boats were sent out for fighting:

Between Nizza and Cape Antibes one antiaircraft battery opened fire because of sighting a telescope.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio monitoring in the morning and at noon UGS 33 might have been within air raid danger in the area of Algiers.

The reconnaissance off the landing area on the afternoon of the 3 March and on the morning of the 4 March sighted nothing essential.

On the afternoon of the 3 March 15 vessels in total on the eastern coast were observed between Vieste and Bari and eight ships were observed off Bari. On the morning of the 4 March three patrol vessels were sailing north of Bari with alternating courses.

On the early hours of the morning of the 4 March air reconnaissance reported one cruiser, three destroyers, two patrol boats, one transport and three smaller merchantmen in the coastal area between Tobruk and Marsa Matruk, steering east.

4 Mar. 1944

Own Situation:

The new construction minesweeper M "7033" and patrol boat Vp "7023" stranded off Via Reggio.

South-east of Elba eight minesweepers are in operation sweeping an old Italian barrage. During the night of 3 March minelaying operation east of Benedetto was carried out as planned.

At 0230 on the 3 March detonations were heard in direction to our own new barrages.

Escort shipping was delayed owing to bad weather.

In addition to the shelling of Bastia by TA-boats (torpedoboats) during the night of the 1 March the German Naval Command Italy reports, that shore batteries replied the fire on our own formation and on the planes which were dropping star shells. The TA-boats fired four torpedoes against the port entrance and observed detonations. Immediately afterwards the formation was attacked by enemy motor torpedo boats, whose torpedoes were avoided. Summary see Radiogram 2355.

At 0900 on the 3 March Submarine U "565" reports a quadruple fan fired on a cruiser suspected to be LEANDER in CO 5714.

After nine minutes two detonations were heard and seen. Besides this one corvette is suspected to be sunk by Zaunkoenig torpedo.

Submarine U "371" left for the operational area in CH 9465 and CJ 7865 and Submarine U "343" for the operational area off the beachhead.

The Naval Staff entreated the German Naval Command Italy to give a judgment of the transportation space in the beachhead of Nettunia in regard to the Submarines-operation in the western Mediterranean. Does the enemy supply be carried out with big or small ships?

The German Naval Command Italy reports, that operations with Submarines in the western Mediterranean may at any rate succeed in good effect. The supply is running mostly via Sicilian ports or immediately from Tunisia to Naples-Bay and from there to beachhead via Isthia-Ponza. Between the beachhead and Bonifacio-Straits only isolated shipping was stated. The operation off the beachhead may become very important because of alarm during unloading at sea and concentrating strong enemy patrol forces which in other case could operate against our own coastal shipping. The enemy supply is carried through mostly by Liberty-freighters and LST, unloading is done by landing craft. The LST partially dock at Anzio.

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3. Area of the Naval Group South.

Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

At 0650 on the 3 March one submarine was sighted south of the Isle of Permuda steering north-east.

Own Situation:

Off Corcula, enemy planes sunk three coastal motor ships and one motor boat, off Makarzka one coastal motor ship. Moreover another two coastal motor ships were seriously damaged.

During the repeated air raid on Split on the 3 March the steamer ADRIATICO (387 BRT) and one coastal motor ship was sunk. During February Split had 110 and Trogir 78 air alerts.

At 0015 on the 4 March partisans caused a blasting in Abbazia close to shelter of the Commanding Staff of Admiral Aegean.

b. Aegean:

Enemy Situation:

According to a agents report it has been said, that on the 22 February a disabled enemy submarine having damaged batteries might have docked in a Bay on the northern point of Chelidromia (north of Euboca) which was camouflaged against aerial sight. Reconnaissance by the Air Force on the 3 March resulted no effect.

At 0035 on the 4 March one submarine was sighted heading east north of the Vathi-Bay.

Own Situation:

On the 2 March one motor sailing ship was sunk by enemy plane off Cape Papas. On the 3 March, enemy planes sunk one motor sailing ship in the harbor of Parga (south-east of Corfu). During the night of 3 March three TA-boats with 450 men aboard entered Rhodes coming from Leros. At about 2230 the boats repulsed an attack of enemy motor torpedo boats. Owing to the troops aboard, the boats were not chased.

In the morning of the 4 March TA-boats transferred 250 soldiers on furlough from Rhodes to Leros.

4 Mar. 1944

At 0050 the steamer SIFNOS (387 BRT) proceeding from Suda to Milos was sunk by enemy plane. From 90 prisoners being aboard more than half are missing. In the afternoon enemy air raid was carried out on Suda-Bay. Our own fighters reached in shooting down one plane definitely and another one is suspected to be.

Sabotage plot was made against the steamer LUENEERG (4697 BRT) lying in dock in Piraeus harbor. From two adhesive sabotage mines one exploded. Slight damage only.

"DRACHE" and two R-boats transferred the occupation force of Stampalia-Island from Leros to Piraeus.

c. Black Sea.

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance one freighter was sailing off the Turkish coast with eastern course at 0840.

The submarine which had been sunk on the 17 February 70 miles west of Eupatoria by the submarine-chaser "106," was, according to Radio monitoring, the submarine "SCHTSCH 216" which left harbor on the 6 February and was detected transmitting for the last time in this area of success on the 11 February.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon of the 3 March and on the morning of the 4 March the naval battery in Kerch-Straits was shelled by enemy battery and had some casualties. The patrol-line in the Kerch-Straits was occupied by four motor minesweepers during the night of 3 March and by three naval landing craft during the night of 4 March. Particular events were not submitted.

During the night of 4 March six PT boats were put in operation off the Caucasian coast.

Submarine U "24" left Constantza for war cruise. On the place of stranding west of St. Gheorge another tanker and one lighter were salvaged. The convoys to Crimea were carried on without particular events.

IX. Situation Eastern Asia.

- Particular reports were not submitted.

5 Mar. 1944

SundayItems of Political Importance.

In an article of the New York's weekly "Foreign Affairs" the author calls the aerial terror against Germany and the Allied operation in the Mediterranean Theater as a long lasting prelude for the invasion of Europe across the English Channel. The Allies will still have to master big tasks. The invasion of Western Europe would be the keystone of all the Allied strategy. If this would be a failure and it could be one, then the Allies would be lost. Still this war would not be won for long time.

The greatest difficulty would be the lack of capable officers.

Following Reuter the diplomatic relations between USA and Argentina had been suspended.

According to a Swedish newspaper, the Argentinian Foreign Office requested the representative of Sweden to introduce negotiations with the Axis powers for resumption of diplomatic relations.

A certain surprise was revealing, when Roosevelt announced, that 1/3 of the Italian Fleet respectively its equivalent would be delivered to Russia. Following Reuter, Marshal Badoglio asked the Allied representatives for details regarding to this step and has reserved his own judgment in this matter.

A Times article stated that in Turkey the party which would be against an entry into the war on the side of the Allies would have the majority in this moment. Following a Swedish information from London, the opinion there is offhand that the realization of Allied plannings for large scale offensive operations in the Balkans was made impossible by the Turkish attitude. This plan, which still was regarded as an alternative for western invasion six months ago, now must be considered as abandoned. The British publicity is preparing to look at Turkey still no more as allied non belligerent power but as neutral power.

Conference on the Situation with Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.Army Situation:

The large scale enemy attack on the left wing of the Army Group South was started and created a critical situation.

5 Mar. 1944

Sunday

On the Narwa - Front too the situation became accentuated.

For the rest no particular reports and decisions.

Special Items

I. Concerning "Tanne:"

The Operations Div./Naval Staff informed the Commander in Chief, Navy of the commanding practice during the Oesel - operation 1917 and the Finland - operation 1918. Draught as per l. SKL 8270/44 Geheim in War Diary Part C Volume III.

II. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy transmits the following judgment of the situation via Group West to the Commander in Chief, Navy.

"1. Situation on the Mainland:

Heavy Russian attack on the 1st Armoured Army Shepetovka - Belogorodka. Serious penetrations of the enemy. Situation on the Narva-Front got very accentuated, was announced to be very serious by the Chief of General Staff, but he believes in standing the situation. Reinforcements with more formations are going on.

2. Tokens to be seen for Russian plan of Crimea-attack and concentration of forces on the Caucasian coast. The Fuehrer fears the attack in the area of Ivanbaba - Feodosiva reference to the necessity of concentrated attention and patrolling by the Navy.

3. Italy: The Fuehrer ordered further defense of the 10th Army in present position and principally creeping to the idea of removal of beachhead, reinforcement of more artillery was ordered. Most severe precautions were ordered against strike movements in Northern Italy.

4. Concerning the powers of fortress commandants the required was arranged. In the case mentioned, there is no doubt for trespass of powers. Independently from Convening Officer powers the Commanding General, Armed Forces West is endeavoured in preventing violation of authorization of fortress commandants. Definitive orders of the Commanding General, Armed Forces West were issued thus eliminating all interfering of fortress commandants into matters of Naval Warfare and basic matters of war at sea."

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The Naval Staff informs the Group South that tokens are submitted to the Armed Forces High Command for Russian plan of Crimea-attack and concentration of forces on the Caucasian coast and that the Fuehrer fears the attack in the area of Ivanbaba - Feodosiva. The Group is reminded of strengthened attention and survey by the Navy.

III. The Group South submitted detailed judgment in reference to the directive of the Naval Staff concerning the accomplishment of defense work for the Aegean (see War Diary 1 March). Telegram as per 1. SKL 721/44 Geheim Chefsache will be found in the documents of 1. SKL I op.

IV. The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff submits a specification of the enemy losses in merchantmen during the month of February. Copy as per 1 SKL 8540/44 Geheim Secret in War Diary Part D Volume "Enemy losses of merchant shipping."

V. The Group South forwarded the proposal to the Army Group F, with copy to Operations Branch/Naval Staff to attach at first the remote controlled target platoon and in accordance with the Commander of the division Brandenburg to the Commander of the 1st PT-boat division for fighting tasks in the Adriatic and to subordinate it to the Admiral Adriatic. Therewith the fact is to be reached, that the platoon may not be put into operation only in event of enemy attack but already would operate there where targets for attack are effectively available and tactical examination may be possible. But for this task the Aegean is not adapted.

The Naval Staff transmits this proposal to knowledge of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy with the remark, that the Naval Staff deems it very suitable to achieve like this.

VI. The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff forwards the judgment of the enemy of the General Staff of the Army/Foreign Armies West from 4 March referring to the conception of landing operations in the northern area. Copy as per 1 SKL 6951/44 GXdos in War Diary Part C Volume IIa. Extractable information of the relevant Naval Headquarters is already done by telegram from the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff. The General Staff of the Army is counting on four or six divisions ready for war in the area of East Scotland to which the shipping space required for will be at disposal. About one or two USA - Divisions from Iceland are to be added. The aim of any enemy operation may be the Norwegian Coast. Regarding the

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Russian total pretensions of power in Finland, the Foreign Armies West considers a Russian agreement with an operation against Petsamo - Murmansk as most unlikely. The forces available will not be sufficient for a large scale operation with decisive effect. In the present phase of battle the operations of the enemy command all turn towards the aim for containing German Forces on the European Front respectively to remove them from the decisive Atlantic Front. But however, Foreign Armies West now deems it irremissable to increase the defensive power at the Norwegian Coast and above all to intensify the air reconnaissance in the whole area of the North Sea. Within these precautions there may be seen the only means to prevent surprising event as to what appeared the landing operations in Sicily and Nettuno. Enforcement of harbor reconnaissance in northern Scottish areas and operations with naval forces Submarines with the only reconnaissance and observation tasks in direction of Scotland may be considered as important additional precautions.

Situation 5 March 1944

I. War in the Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation in the West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group 13 and at the 19th Group 41 and at the Azores Squadrons six planes have been detected in action. Three wireless telegraphic guards, one British merchantman and seven British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Both off La Pallice and Royan two ground-mines each were swept. Two outgoing submarines and one entering submarine were escorted.

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Channel Area.

One crash boat was slightly damaged west of Le Havre by presumably acoustic mine. One patrol-boat line was occupied.

Owing to bad weather conditions, minesweepers were not in action.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea.

Both one mine was swept off Norderney and off Schiermonikoog. The convoy 485 Elbe-Hook temporarily anchored at Borkum roads and proceeded at 1700. The convoy 1227 Hook - Elbe with six steamers has been started. At 2235 the Swedish steamer DIANA (1878 BRT) from the Ems-Elbe convoy was sunk by air torpedo during an attack of three enemy planes in AN 9575. Ship anti-aircraft artillery and escorting vessels shot down two attacking planes.

In the evening, four enemy planes were observed north-west of Borkum in suspected minelaying operations.

In the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters three convoys with about 31,000 BRT were carried out.

In the area of Commanding Admiral Defenses North ten Patrol-lines were occupied.

Norway, Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

23 planes were detected at the 18th Group Command. Planes of this Group reported successful attacks on our own convoys. Russian reconnaissance planes spotted our own convoys in Varanger-Fiord and in Syltefiord.

At 1830 our own air reconnaissance reported amount of ships in Scapa Flow with at least three aircraft carriers, three battleships, one passenger ship, about 30 landing shipw and boats, furthermore about 30 - 40 smaller and medium-sized war vessels. One plane being in reconnaissance mission for Scapa Flow sighted in AM 3460 one what is suspected to be convoy consisting of 30 - 40 vessels steering 30 - 50°.

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One plane detached for reconnaissance to Lerwik, did not come back.

Following our own air reconnaissance on the afternoon of the 4 March there were two destroyers lying on the Scottish West coast in Little Minch, in Loch Eive seven larger and more than 50 medium-sized and smaller steamers, as well as one destroyer and three patrol boats. A triple net barrage was spotted running from the north-western corner to the isle on Loch Eive to the south-western corner. All the ships had no balloon-barrage. Landing craft or ships had not been observed. This amount of ships does not mean any extraordinary fact.

2. Own Situation:

Penetrations of planes were reported as follows: On 3 March two penetrations into the area of Kirkenes with 20 planes, and bombing, seven penetrations into the area of Vardoe with 13 planes, two penetrations into the area of Petsamo with five planes and both one penetration into the area of Banak and Tromsøe.

At 1320 on the 5 March the east-bound convoy K 1 was attacked with air torpedoes and bombs off Eckeroe with no effect. In the evening the submarine-chaser "1703" was sunk by torpedo plane off Lindesnes. Fifty-two survivors, among them the Commanding Officer and the 1st watchkeeping Officer were rescued.

Thirty-eight northbound and 23 southbound ships were escorted.

The Admiral Northern Waters reports continuation of the operation against the QP 26. The Submarines did not succeed in attacking the convoy: The Commander Submarines Norway reports on the Submarines situation at 2300, that during the night of 4 March from about 0100 contact aircraft were close to the QP 26. For several times the Submarines took the bearing of the contact aircraft and detected the convoy or the patrol escort. In dawn again the Submarines were more often attacked by planes. In order to find the enemy again a double patrol line across the direction of enemy advance was ordered at 1800. But this line could not be reached by all boats in time. Resumption of air contact only was established at 1515. At about 1600 a 2nd and 3rd enemy group presumably being part of the convoy or cover was sighted or located. There were twelve Submarines in action. Weather conditions got unfavorable. In event the enemy would not be detected by the submarines during the night, relevant pushing forward of the patrol-line by outflanking advancing ahead is planned on day. Owing to weather conditions and the strength of enemy forces the Air Force desires to remain in contact under resign of further reconnaissance towards the Q P with temporal concentration

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in the afternoon and evening. In addition to the question of Submarine disposition in the Northern Waters the Commander Submarines Norway transmits the reference, which was fundamental to the judgment of the Group North/Fleet (see War Diary 1 March). Copy of relevant radiogram as per 1. SKL 6973/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume 'IIa.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea, Baltic Sea Entrances1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Thirty boats and five planes in the Baltic Sea Entrances and 29 boats and five minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea were engaged in minesweeping. Off Cape Kullen two mines and off the Mecklenburg-Bay one mine were swept.

Convoy-shipping was carried through as planned.

The minelayers ROLAND, LINZ and BRUMMER were escorted for operation "Grossgoerschen".

Torpedo boat T "5" was rammed by T "3" owing to disabled rudder off Rixhoeft at 1230. Both the boats have been damaged.

In proceeding to the East the net-tenders "20" and "19" and four working boats had the position south of Bornholm at 1800. Landing craft B "6," "35" and WF "119" are lying in Pillau; AF "30," "31," "32," "46" and "50" arrived at Libau. AF "2," "5," "8" and "49" were south of Bornholm, AF "35," and "29" off Nidden.

For the rest nothing to report.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff reports on enemy merchant shipping in the Pacific Ocean as it were on 1 March 1944 and on the supply base of mineral oil in the Persian Gulf in the 4th quarter of 1943. Copy of reports in accordance to 1 SKL 6929/44 respectively 6953/44 in War Diary Part C Volume XI.

The description of the enemy merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean turns out to be extremely informative and suitable.

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VI. U-Boat Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Following Radio Monitoring the MKS 41 was sailing about 34° west of Gibraltar on 4 March at 2100 and the MKS 43 on the evening of 4 March 410 miles west of Cape St. Vincent.

2. Own Situation:

In returning from the operational area off Newfoundland the Submarine U "539" sighted one three-funnel liner in B C 3820 on NE-course and one two-funnel liner with destroyer heading South-West, both units were sailing with medium speed; and on the 1 March she sighted one part of a convoy in B C 4632 heading south. For the rest no particular reports from the Atlantic.

On the 22 February Submarine U "510" (Commanding Officer Lt. Eick) sighted on day in the Indian Ocean in the Gulf of Aden a convoy consisting of 13 tankers, six freighters with two destroyers protected by strong fighter escort.

On 23 February after successful Aphrodite* action he sunk two tankers of 8 respectively 10,000 BRT and two freighters of both 7,000 BRT in the night in MP 5511 and is suspecting to have sunk another freighter of 7,000 BRT. According to report of the Naval Attaché Tokyo the tanker WINNETOU was torpedoed on 2 February in 2620 North 12611 East by enemy submarine and entered Naha for repair by own power.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

West Area:

During the day about 200 enemy planes penetrated into Belgium/Northern France without any particular attack. Two bomber formations consisting of about 300 four-engined planes penetrated into the area Bordeaux - Arcachor, while four fighter formations visited the area of Angouleme. The airfields of Bergerac, Bussac and Cognac had been attacked, the first and latter mentioned was seriously damaged. Ninety-nine of our own fighters shot down four attacking planes, five FW 200 got lost thereof three being shot down in the air.

Further 60 enemy planes penetrated into the area of Caen-Brest and 40 planes into the area of Rennes without attacking. During the night of 5 March 26 penetrating planes were reported in Belgium/Northern France, and in Western France about 85 ones presumably supplying agents.

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Coming from the South another 10 penetrations into the coastal area of Cannes were reported.

Reich Territory.

On day, ten single planes flew via Northern Netherlands, Heligoland Bight into the area north of Esbjerg, Zealand, Stralsund, Uelzen, Braunschweig, Bielefeld, Bocholt. One plane reached Frankfurt/Oder. Attacks were not reported.

In the afternoon isolated missions into the areas of Muenchen-Gladbach, Bonn, Schweifurt and south of Frankfurt/Main were reported equally without attacks. In the evening isolated planes dropped bombs in the area of Aachen-Duesseldorf. Another enemy plane penetrated into the area of Osnabrueck, another one into the area of Stendal-Meppen. Three German training planes, two Ju 88 and one Ar. 96 were shot down in the vicinity of our own airfields.

Mediterranean Theater:

On the 4 March 300 enemy planes were counted in the area south of Rome. Attacks were reported on St. Stefano and on small ports on the eastern coast of Elba. One plane out of 16 reconnaissance planes was shot down by our own fighters in the Aegean.

Own photographic reconnaissance of Bastia on the 4 March revealed a high amount of ships lying in this harbor with six steamers and seven coastal vessels, but without any landing craft.

Reconnaissance on the 5 March in the western Mediterranean yielded no tactical results. A convoy of twelve steamers was sighted in the Ionian Sea 90 miles south-east of Cape Passero heading south-east and in south-west off this one a second convoy with 14 steamers was sailing on the same course. 140 miles southeast of Cape Passero one transport and two destroyers were sailing on NW/course.

Eastern Front.

On the 4 March 1128 own and 524 enemy missions were reported. Ten enemy planes were shot down with the loss of four of our own planes.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

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Following Radio Monitoring the convoy GUS 32 was sailing in the outer area of Algiers during the night of 4 March. One USA-convoy, presumably east-bound, was detected in the waters off Alboran - Oran.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

Two destroyers stood for western course 22 miles east of Maddalena, they are believed to come from the beach-head. Twelve miles east of Nettuno there were eight or nine freighters as well as ten - 15 smaller vessels. Besides this, a patrol line manned by 15 vessels was sighted west of Nettuno up to Cape Circeo. According to Army observation reports, there were seven or eight landing boats and three LST in Anzio-harbor. At 0755, two convoys of altogether 26 merchantmen and eight patrol vessels were sailing about 110 miles ENE of Malta steering a south-easterly course while 140 miles southeast of Malta one transport and two destroyers were steering northwesterly course.

According to Radio Monitoring the convoy MKS 42 left Naples on the afternoon of the 4 March. On the 4 March one convoy proceeding south was in Otranto-Straits.

On the evening of the 4 March one what was believed to be a USA-convoy proceeding from Augusta to Algiers was detected in the outer waters east of Biserta.

Own Situation:

During the night of 3 March one of our own convoys was attacked without effect by enemy reconnaissance plane off Vada. In the raid on St. Stefano on the afternoon of 4 March the harbor-entrance was again damaged. In the fighter-bomber raid on Benedetto one harbor defense boat sunk and another one stranded damaged. During the fighter-bomber attack on Civitanova three coastal motor boats got totally lost. On 4 March Benedetto reported newly mine detonations in direction to the new barrages.

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Owing to bad weather conditions escort duties and patrol service was seriously curtailed.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

On the 4 March the steamer ANNA MARTINI (935 BRT) was shot afire by enemy plane in Zara, presumably totally lost. Following a report of the Panzer Army High Command our own stronghold on the northern coast of Brac was captured. Near Uljan one coastal motor ship had been sunk by aircraft gunfire. Our own troops landed on Brac against weaker enemy. During the night of 4 an enemy commando raid against Solta was repulsed by the occupation forces of the isle.

The Group South reports the transport efficiency of February in the area of the Chief, Supply and Transport Adriatic to the amount of 22,899 tons in contrary to 30,206 tons in January. This reduction may be caused by the extremely enforced air activity of the enemy which inflicted break-downs and damage, heavy delays of repair due to overcharge of shipyards, lack of escorting vessels, stopping of coastal shipping for several days owing to Bora-winds as well as delays in leaving harbors due to desertations. Details and losses see Radiogram 1610.

b. Aegean:

On the evening of the 4 March steamer GERTRUD left Porto Lago with torpedoboat TA "15," "16," "19" with 260 furloughers, 3200 prisoners and 60 civil workers, Piraeus-bound.

Regarding the sabotage plot in Piraeus (see War Diary 4 March) and correcting the facts there was reported that no adhesive mine but a melinite petard with modern time fuse was used.

On the afternoon of the 5 March Porto Lago was attacked by six enemy planes. No damage was inflicted.

The operation Skyros was carried out without particular events. Owing to developing stormy weather conditions all escort traffic was stopped. Also, navigation is seriously threatened by enemy air forces during the period of new-moon and therefore handicapped. The South of Aegean is permanently surveyed by enemy air forces.

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The Group South reports on the sea transport efficiency in the Aegean during February 1944 with 27748 tons in contrary to 24,743 tons in January. Details and losses see Radiogram 1845.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring ten PT-boats and two motor gun-boats received long wireless messages in the morning. Therefore there must be reckoned with operations in the waters north of the East coast respectively Kertsch-Straits.

Own Situation:

In operating leeward the Caucasian coast towards midnight in the night of 4 March the 1st PT-boat Flotilla was engaged with two motor gun-boats NW of Tuapse, which immediately shoved off with highest speed towards the shore and after having obtained some hits came out of sight. During the night of 4 March the patrol line in Kerch-Straits had no enemy encounters. During the night of 5 March it will be manned with four motor minesweepers.

On the 4 March enemy batteries repeatedly shelled the 3. and 4. battery of the Naval Artillery Detachment 613 without essential effect.

The net-tender ANTILOPE has been swamped and sunk during her towing in to Constantza from place of stranding.

The Group South reports the sea transport performances in Black Sea during February with 80,941 tons in contrary to 66,958 tons in January. Thereoff 52,455 tons went to Crimea, 13,003 tons from Crimea. Details see Radiogram 1611.

IX. Situation Eastern Asia.

New Guinea - Bismarck Archipelago.

For a new time American destroyers carried out bombardments on the shore of Neu-Mecklenburg.

Banda - Sea.

Following Allied reports two coastal ships were sunk near Timor and seven were damaged.

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Northern Pacific.

Again American naval bombers dropped bombs on Paramuthir and Shimushu.

Caroline-Islands and Marshall Islands.

Yet the non-occupied atolls of the Marshall-Islands, the Islands of Ponape and Kusai are raided nearly every day.

Burma.

In the western part of the fighting area the battle rose again on behalf of the possession of an important pass. The Japanese report, that during the passing operations in this area against the 7th British-Indian Division about 600 soldiers were made prisoners and 7000 were killed in action.

Generalities.

According to Japanese reports there had been sunk five enemy submarines in January, six ones in February and a total of 407 enemy planes were shot down by Japanese Army Air Forces in contrary to own losses of 80 planes.

The Naval Attaché Tokio reports:

"The Head of Naval Air Department Vice Admiral Tsukahara was simultaneously commissioned to take charge of affairs of the first Deputy Chief of Admiral Staff. Therewith after discharging the Chief of General and Admiral Staff, the Navy followed the example of the army with appointing of two Deputy-Chiefs. By appointing Tsukahara the production of Air Forces and its operational launching came practically in one hand."

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing special to report.

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At 1300 discussion took place with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff in presence of the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command East, Admiral Kummetz on the subject of operation "Tanne". On the 4 and 5 March Admiral Kummetz had discussions in the operational areas with the Commander, Minesweepers East, Commanding Admiral Baltic Countries, and with the Commanding General Army Group North.

Following the description represented to him, the political situation in Finland remains unscrutable. The Chief of Staff of the Commander Minesweepers East judges the Finnish situation at least to be positive. The Armed Forces' attitude is strongly adapted against the armistice. On the 5 March General Model judges the situation on the Narva Front in positive sense and makes known to the Commander in Chief, Navy by Admiral Kummetz that the Army would stay at the Narva.

But in meantime, there arrived a telephone-call of the High Command, Operations Staff at the Operations Division/Naval Staff, where after General Jodl gives information, that in certain circumstances it would be necessary to act in very short time. This information is in so far surprising, as up to now the Armed Forces High Command has wished to deal with the preparations for "Tanne" relating only to thoughts.

Then, the directives which had been issued for the operation "Tanne" were discussed. It is stated that the records on the Aland-Islands are under way. As to the employment of naval forces the Commanding Admiral of the Naval Command East is planning to operate with the task force of the Gulf of Finland against Hochland providing that the icing situation will expect interference of Russian naval forces and in case whether sufficient fighter escort could be granted. According to the Commander's Minesweepers East opinion, there will be no danger of enemy mines. Following to the Naval Staff's opinion the operation of the task force also would depend upon the development of political situation. If the Fins would be trying to defend Hochland, what will not be expected, and the Russians might be leaving off ports, than the ships have to be put into operation at Hochland.

The task force started exercises in shelling land targets.

The desire of the Naval Command East for allocation of four more minesweepers will be checked again. But its realization depends upon the further development of the enemy minelaying offensive operation in the Western Baltic.

The Commanding Admiral of the Naval Command East deems it absolutely necessary to detail the 2nd and 3rd Torpedo-boats Flotilla and is thinking that without that the execution of the operation "Tanne" will be impossible even on account of the troop transports.

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The presence of "SCHEER" only can be estimated up to the middle of April at the least on 1 May. Following the report of the Chief of Fleet Training Unit the light cruisers are not yet sufficiently trained in ships' general drill.

For the rest all the other questions are clear.

The Commander in Chief, Navy and the Chief of Operations Div./Naval Staff returned from their journey to France.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy at 1800.

I. In reference to the question of Submarine operations in the Mediterranean, the Naval Staff submits the following condensed directive to the Commander Submarines Mediterranean, which the Commander in Chief, Navy agreed:

"1. The distribution of Submarines in the Mediterranean is reliable on:

- a. the tasks to resolve,
- b. the emissibility of the submarine bases.

Again, the focal point referring to a. would be the western Mediterranean because the directive of the Armed Forces High Command (referring to the focal point: Repulse of the attack against Crete and the Aegean) transmitted with Radiogram 1 SKL Ia 805/44 GKdos got obsolete with the Radiogram 1 SKL I u 190/44 Chefsache from 19 January (Order for boats, which may get ready in the Western Mediterranean for operation off the beachhead of Nettuno). After cancelling the deliveries of armaments by the Allies to Turkey, the distribution of boats to bases (14 in the West, four in the East) corresponds with the present concentration, so that the transfer of boats through Sicily Straits would at first not become necessary.

2. The Radiogram of the Commander in Chief, South-West A I M 126/44 Chefsache from 4 March and the judgment on the traffic situation in the area of Nettuno-Naples requested the Operations Div./Naval Staff from the German Naval Command confirmed the attitude of the Naval Staff, that in case of enemy supply profitable targets may also appear in these waters. There may be added, that more landing operations on the west coast of Italy will be anticipated, to the beginning of which Submarines are to be present.

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3. Decision referring to Commander Submarines Mediterranean 95/44 Chefsache (1 SKL I u 649/44 Chefsache from 29 February.:

Five boats to the area of Naples-Nettuno, and some more to the North-African coast) will therefore newly be confirmed.

4. The tactical allocations in the operational area of the Western Mediterranean for the next time may be outlined to the following judgment of priority:

- a. Otranto-Straits - South point of Sicily
- b. Cyrenaika
- c. Levant-coast.

5. Referring to 3. and 4. report plannings for the next time and inform partners.

In conjunction to this, the Chief of Operations Branch/Naval Staff reports on the transfer of the netlayers and the night-fighter-directing-ship "TOGO" to the Gulf of Finland and on the increasing appearance of air torpedo-planes against the convoy traffic in the Norwegian area as well as on the doubts transmitted by the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy which rose in Headquarter concerning the suspected enemy attack on Crimea of which the Group South was informed. Reports were already made to these affairs.

II. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff points out concerning the judgment of the enemy situation in Northern Scotland to which reports were made in various cases that the concentration of forces up there under certain circumstances may become important to the development of situation in Finland.

III. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

Today's Reuter-information on German-Finnish discussions hits the point. However the further contents of this Reuter information, which deals with the contents and interruption of these discussions was not confirmed.

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IV. Army Situation:

No certain informations on enemy offensive operations against Crimea were submitted. The 111th Infantry Division will be carried to the peninsula by air.

The fighting of the Army Group South lead to strong enemy penetrations near Kriwoi Rog and in the area west of Cherkassy causing an essential withdrawal of our own front. The situation on the left wing of the Army Group Manstein grew extremely unsatisfactory. Between Juba and Jampol the situation became very serious. Enemy spearheads of tanks threaten the railroad Lemberg-Odessa. Our own forces are partially outflanked and are engaged in hard fighting towards all directions. The reinforcements with new forces became very difficult because of bad roads. The Staff-Headquarters of the Army Group South had been withdrawn to Kamenez Podolsk. To large extent Crimea supply is to be transferred from Odessa to Constantza.

Fighting has peaced in the area of the Army Group Center. The battle at Beresina-River turned out a full defense victory. The enemy attacks imminent in area of Smolensk on the Highway had been started. Increasing fighting had been reported from the Narva Front. The new 214th Infantry Division introduced from Norway had been outrun in the position of River banks on Narva-River.

Detached task force of the 58 Infantry Division saved the situation. South-west of Narva the battle was fought with arme blanche.

Our own operation in the beachhead south of Tiber-River evidently was suspended, because the withdrawal of forces was reported.

Fleet Operations Section/Naval Staff gave a condensed report of the precautions passed up to now concerning operation "Tanne". The Commander in Chief, Navy agreed with them.

Special Items:

I. Operation "Tanne":

1. The disposition of the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff FM (Foreign Navies) concerning the Aland-Islands was sent to the Naval Command East, Group North/Fleet Copy as per 1 SKL 7074/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

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2. In answering an inquiry from 3 March the Naval Staff informs the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff of some details on troop transportation facilities without considering the icing situation and transportation on railroads. About 20,000 soldiers without heavy weapons and equipment could be transported within ten days. Forty-eight hours later 16 ships with 30,000 BRT would be available. In addition to that the report also contains details on naval forces, which had been put at the disposal to the Commander Minesweepers East. Copy of the adequate Radiogram 1 SKL I op 7043/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

3. The Naval Command East reports that the minelayers "BRUMMER," "ROLAND," "LINZ" are subordinated to the Commander Minesweepers East with date of 7 March after arriving at Kopenhagen.

II. From a report of experiences on supply questions in fighting the enemy beachhead at Nettuno, which at present is submitted to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff may be understood that in his landing areas the enemy was very sensible to gunfire. Besides this, the report is revealing the difficulties of army batteries in fighting targets at sea. Also by fighting the landing areas with 17cm and K5 ammunition, both, the method of fire and the possibilities of observation of our own ammunition proved very unsatisfactory. In air burst firing with 17 cm ammunition there were troubles in the inaccuracy of time fuses. After having fired five or six rounds for getting the range on ship targets mostly, which could not be observed, the fire had to be interrupted because this precious ammunition was not worth the effort and the ships already laid a smoke screen or went off. Also the coast sharply sloping down made the own observation very difficult.

According to Intelligence report from reliable sources in Spain an authority in the British Embassy of Madrid announced that a great number of commando raids would be started instead of one large invasion operation and so far as possible all at the same time. The beachheads being won hereby would be extended. For the rest the planning would be making Germany mature for victory by increasing air activities and attacks night by night with up to 5000 aircraft. Thus avoiding that the large attack could be repulsed and so enabling Germany perhaps to follow up to Great Britain.

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Situation 6 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Naval Attaché in Lisbon forwards a report from the Consulate in Madeira saying that on the morning of 26 February one enemy group consisting of a carrier and five destroyers passed south of Madeira steering a westerly course.

Following a Counter Intelligence report, Swedish soldiers returning from America stated that from the middle to the end of February 1.2 million BRT of tonnage are concentrated in Chesapeake Bay, which gradually could be withdrawn to Great Britain for invasion purposes. Besides this, another 560 - 600,000 BRT would be concentrated in Albemarle Bay.

2. Own Situation:

BRAKE receives the following directive by radiogram 1618:

"For protection and reconnaissance of the area around the meeting point the three boats, which will be supplied would be employed some days before 11 March. One boat stands for the meeting point and in its closest surroundings, both the other boats some what farther off to the northwestern sector seen from the meeting point. Observations of the boats which may threaten the meeting will immediately be transmitted to BRAKE."

The Naval Attaché in Tokyo requests information if KIEFER has arrived respectively when arrival would be expected.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

Numbers of missions made by the 15th and 19th Group could not be transmitted owing to interferences of communications. Six British vessels and one USA-war ship were located in the in-coming escort area.

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2. Owr. Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Off St. Nazaire one mine was swept. Three submarines entering and two ones leaving had been escorted.

Channel Area:

Towards evening the batteries TODT and LINDEMANN fired twice surprisingly at the located enemy convoy off Dover without observing the effect.

Patrol positions were not occupied. Off Le Havre one mine was swept.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

At 0438 the patrol boat "1304" was sunk with torpedoes by enemy motor torpedo boats off Ymuiden. Among the 20 dead and 19 missing there is the Commanding Officer.

The convoy 485 arrived at Den Helder and proceeded to Hook at 1900. Escort forces has been essentially reinforced from Den Helder. Up to now the convoy 1227 Hook-Elbe was carried through without incidents.

One mine was swept north of Tershelling and another five north of Hook.

In the hours of noon penetrating and returning enemy planes were fired on by Naval anti aircraft artillery on the German and Dutch coast. The battery Vlieland East was attacked by gunfire. One USA-pilot being in distress was rescued by water police in the Zuider Sea.

Norway/Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group busy flights carried out by 35 planes were detected over the central and northern North Sea up to the Norwegian coast and in north-western direction. Reports on our own convoys as well as on attacks on our convoys were detected.

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According to rough evaluation the photograph from Scapa taken on the 5 March indentified the following results: two battle-ships of the DACOTA-class, two other battle ships type not recognizable, two auxiliary aircraft carriers, four what was thought to be cruisers of unknown type and other details see Radiogram 1145.

The photographical observations of Scapa are belonging so far to the past (July 1943) that they are not worth comparison. It cannot be decided if the USA-battle ships are substitutes for British vessels probably withdrawn to the East-Asian Theater or had been newly transferred to the West Area. However, one may assume that the enemy Fleet Headquarters are willing to keep a task force ready for action in the Northern Waters which may be suited to all tasks. The detection of only two auxiliary aircraft carriers contradicts the counter intelligence report from 4 March of alleged presence of eight aircraft carriers. Untrustworthiness of the above mentioned agents-report would therewith be confirm for other details, too.

The shipping concentration detected by air reconnaissance on the 4 March in Loch Ewe amounts to about 300,000 BRT. However, it is not assumed that this would be the reserve tonnage detached to the north-western Scottish ports but only the transit tonnage. Loch Ewe is rallying point for the British coastal shipping, for the Iceland and the Russia-convoys and harbours parts of the Atlantic shipping for distribution to the British east coast and northern area.

It may be assumed that the convoy sighted by one of our own planes on the 5 March 60 miles north of Cape Wrath and consisting of 30-40 ships presumably may be the PG 31 which were to leave on searching Scottish Waters on the 5 March.

According to own air reconnaissance the QP 26 was sailing in AB 8472 at 1130 and in AB 7699 at 1400. At 0420 our own submarines reported the convoy in AB 8493 and at 0744 in AB 8854. Thereoff dissolution into at least two convoys is estimated. At 2340 an aircraft located one convoy in AF 1553. The convoy was reported in strength of 15 steamers with one plane carrier and eight destroyers.

Second phase interpretation of the photograph of Murmansk on the 3 March indentified, that no landing craft can be assumed on deck of the standard freighters. These are 37 motor boats with a length of 19 - 22 m and for the rest there was freight of other kind on deck.

2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of the 5 March five enemy planes were sighted in the area of Petsamo and Kirkenes, 36 planes in the area of Vardoe and one in the area of Banak.

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At 2000 on the 4 March the Norwegian steamer RIDDERFOLD (209 BRT) stranded in the area of the Admiral North Norwegian Coast. At 0730 on the 5 March the steamer WACHTEL (920 BRT) ran aground near Stadlandet but could come free again by own power.

At 0030 on the 6 March two dimmed vessels, presumably motor torpedo boats were sighted shoving off to sea.

On the evening of the 5 March and during the night of 5 March both one enemy penetration was reported into the area of Obrestad - Florøey - Askevold. At 0035 the submarine-chaser "1713" has been attacked, with air torpedoes by enemy plane in Skudesnes Fiord without effect. At 1645 the north-convoy consisting of nine ships escorted by three minesweepers and three submarine-chasers was attacked by nine enemy planes with torpedoes and gunfire off Obrestad. The steamer RABE (993 BRT) was sunk. Casualties were caused by gunfire on board of minesweeper M "33."

Brief report of the 61st Patrolboat Flotilla of the air raid on the convoy K1 on the 5 March see Radiogram 1715.

41 ships were escorted to the North and 15 to the South.

The Admiral North Norwegian Coast reports the following convoys during the month of February:

At Polar Coast: 27 war ships, 176 merchantmen with 416,581 BRT;
at the Northern Coast: nine warships, 299 merchantmen with 708,247 BRT;
at the Western Coast: 19 warships, 231 merchantmen with 570,227 BRT.

The fighting with submarines against the QP 26 was seriously impaired by effective destroyer and carrierborne air-defense. From 0300 the boats followed up the enemy with top speed who presumably breached the Submarines position untroubled and are trying to haul ahead in order to exploit the last possibility for attack at night. Two submarines sustained damage and casualties. In AB 8571 submarine U "959" sunk one destroyer by Zaunkoenig-torpedo. At 1324 submarine U "288" reported the firing of a stern-Zaunkoenig torpedo on another destroyer in AB 8611 and detonation after 14 minutes. The total result of the operation against QP 26 was the sinking of three destroyers and torpedoing of two more destroyers.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic-Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

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On the evening of the 6 March ten or fifteen enemy planes penetrated into the area of the Kieler Foerde up to Kiel-Bay and laid mines.

2. Own Situation:

Thirty boats and four minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea Entrances and 39 boats and seven minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea were engaged in minesweeping. Both in the Kiel-Bay and south-west of Bornholm one mine was swept.

Convoys were carried through as planned.

At 1800 the nightfighter directing ship TOGO was sailing according to dead reckoning off Bruesterort and the group of nettenders off Darsserort. The landingcraft B "6," "35" and WF "119" arrived at Pillau. Four armed fishing vessels and four boats of the 17th Patrol-boat Flotilla are proceeding from Tallin - Narva Bay.

Situation on the Mainland.

From Hungerburg section a quiet day was reported. In the area of the Army Group Narva our own protecting troops in penetration area north-west of Omuti were repulsed on the 5 March. In general, continuous west and south attacks in the penetration area of Krivasso had been repulsed. The enemy beachhead of Vebskuela had been wiped out.

West of the road Golow-Pskov the enemy penetrated 1.5 km into our own positions attacking in regiments strength.

V. Submarine Warfare:

No particular reports were submitted from the Atlantic and Indian Ocean.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area:

There were busy penetrations into the occupied West Zones. Strong formations attacked airfields and transport installations. In the evening 58 enemy planes were reported in Belgium/Northern France some of them attacking with bombs and in Western-France 85 enemy planes

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presumably supplying agents. Towards midnight 350 planes penetrated into the area south of Paris and successfully attacked the marshalling yard of Trappes. The attack on the airfield of Guyancourt yielded no results.

Six of our own fighter bombers operated against the British South Coast.

Reich Territory:

During the hours of forenoon several planes penetrated into the Rhenian-Westfalian industrial district and via Flensburg into the area of Stralsund-Pommerania up to Prenzlau without attacks. Coming from the South, several planes flew via Fiume to Klagenfurt up to southwest of Knittelfeld.

From 1125 to 1540 several hundred bombers with fighter escort penetrated via Den Helder - Hannover into the area of Magdeburg and from there attacked Berlin from the South and South-West. Several fighter formations penetrated into the area of Berlin via the Netherlands - Paderborn - Halberstadt. From 1300 rallying formations continuously penetrated into the area of Emschede. The attack on Berlin was carried out from 1310 - 1340 in 6-7000 m altitude by 2-5/10 clouding and hit nearly all parts of the town. Genshagen again was attacked. In the vicinity of Koenigswusterhausen a closed bombing carpet was dropped. Following the reports up to now, 128 enemy planes were shot down with the losses of five of our own planes.

During the night isolated enemy harassing planes penetrated into the area of Braunschweig-Krefeld-Saarbruecken - Hannover - Stendal - Dortmund - Wiesbaden and Heilbronn. Krefeld was hit by four bombs. The railroad Lehrte-Hannover was attacked with gunfire without effect.

Mediterranean Theater:

In regard to unfavorable weather conditions only few operations were executed on the 5 March. Particular results in reconnaissance were not submitted on the 6 March.

Eastern Area:

There were 456 of our own and 420 enemy aircraft missions carried through on the Eastern Front during the 5 March. Four of our own planes were

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lost and eight enemy planes were shot down. Operations of the 5th Air Force have been already reported.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1020 on the 5 March Gibraltar reports nine freighters sailing in ballast with escort Atlantic bound. The group passed Tangers at 1630. At 1850 a French cruiser suspected to be JEAN DE VIENNE was sailing off Punta Carnero and proceeding from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

Following the report of an agent of the German Armed Forces Intelligence Center Spain from 28 February one large convoy was expected to enter in Casablanca loaded with USA-landing troops.

At 1400 on the 6 March Cape Spartel reported a convoy consisting of 36 freighters and seven escorting vessels heading to the Mediterranean. At 1840 two aircraft carriers of unknown type entered Gibraltar from the Atlantic.

Own Situation:

Minesweeping, escort and patrol duties were cancelled owing to rough sea. At 1325 a telescop was sighted west of Toulon.

The German Naval Command Italy reported, that the entire stopping of transfer of steamers from Italy to France seems to be unsuitable in regard to the transportation of war materiel. Increasing number of submarine-chasers is required.

The Naval Staff informs the German Naval Command Italy, with copy to Group West that in no case entire suspension of transfer was planned, but that this only might have been a temporary stoppage and starting again will immediately begin when the situation will recover.

For replacement of the Nancy-barrages being expired in February and March, the Group West applied for 1040 EMC* (Type of German mine) and as substitute for useless EMF* of the south-coast at once for another

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500 EMC*. For further replacements 1000 EMC* will be required from April. Therefore the demand amounts in March to 1000, in April to 600, in May to 500 pieces.

The Naval Staff will distribute as required.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring an unknown steamer reported at 0835 sighting of telescop and at 0852 torpedoing. The radio monitoring service assumes a vessel from UGS 33, because the message was transmitted again by the radio station of Rinella (Malta). However, the position remains unknown.

At 0945 our air reconnaissance detected one LCT on westerly course 31 miles off Cagliari and at 1035 one anti aircraft cruiser, three freighters, four destroyers and two escort vessels west of Anzio and further more one destroyer on southerly course 17 miles north-west of Anzio and at 1430 eight or ten merchantmen with numerous escort vessels six miles off the beachhead.

In the harbor of Ortona there was no amount of shipping.

In the air raid on the Radar location post St. Giorgio two attacking aircraft were shot down.

Following Counter Intelligence report assembling of landing craft and ships was observed again in the harbor of Naples.

Shortly arrived USA-Task troops expect to be embarked for presumably new landing operation north of Rome. The Naval Staff forwarded this report with reservation to the German Naval Command Italy.

Own Situation:

Owing to bad weather conditions the patrol- and escort duties were cancelled during the night of 5 March. Torpedoboat TA "29" was commissioned in Genoa.

At 2115 Submarine U "616" is suspecting to have sunk a destroyer with Zaunkoenig torpedo in CJ 5952. Shortly after midnight of 6 March Submarine U "407" torpedoed the motor tanker "ENSIS."

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3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

At 0045 three one-stack destroyers coming from south-west were sighted 15 miles south-west of Trieste. After asking recognition signal the vessels turned off the shore.

After having met British Commando Group on central Dalmatian Isles, increasing activity in the entire coastal area especially on the isles must be expected for more than usual.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

b. Aegean.

Enemy Situation:

At 0500 on the 5 March one Submarine was sighted in Suda-Bay. At 0615 one Submarine was located by torpedoboats south of Chios. Both one motor sailing ship was sunk by plane off Patras and Santorin on the 4 March. On the afternoon of the 5 March six enemy bombers attacked Porto Lago without effecting essential damage.

Own Situation:

Details of the PT-boats attack on the troop-convoy at 2230 on the 3 March off Rhodos contains the short report of the Commander 9th Torpedoboats Flotilla. Copy see Radiogram 1010. Torpedoboat TA "15" outmanoeuvred the torpedoes. Pursuite off the harbor of Rhodos was not possible as the enemy PT-boats ingenuously lined up behind the mine-barrage.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

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At 2310 one submarine was located 60 miles south of Cape Sarich.

At 1525 Submarine U "24" reported 18 PT-boats steering westerly course 60 miles south of Kerch Straits. Further observation by plane was impossible owing to bad weather conditions.

Regarding to enemy situation the traffic on Crimea-Coast was stopped and convoys were shifted. Immediate readiness was ordered for six PT-boats lying in Ivanbaba and sea-alarm was sounded for the South-coast of Crimea.

During the night of 5 March the patrol position in Kerch-Straits was occupied with four motor minesweepers.

Additionally was reported, that on the 1 March a naval battery destroyed one enemy gun in fighting on the mainland on the Northern Front with 30 rounds of medium caliber ammunition.

South of Bugatz one motor sailing ship, one tug and one lighter ran aground. The tug came free again.

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with Commander in Chief, Navy.

In a highly restricted circle:

The Chief of Organization and Mobilization Branch reports of the discussion with the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Section on the proposed organization referring the transfer of the secret reporting

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service to the Reichsfuehrer SS serving as foundation in the conclusive discussions between the latter mentioned and the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command -

The Armed Forces High Command favors the proposal according to which the Services may have their own closed organization of military reporting service under the direction of the Armed Forces High Command, which will be subordinated to the Reichsfuehrer SS. The Navy was not participated in this plan. For the Navy its execution would mean the establishment of an adequate new organization. But on the contrary the SS is planning an united SS-organization participating only the qualified and required Armed Forces officials.

But the Commander in Chief, Navy's opinion is, that the regulation planned by the Armed Forces High Command does not justice to the thoughts of Fuehrer's directive insisting on creating of Secret Service. Judgment will be forwarded to the Chief of Armed Forces High Command Intelligence Division, Secret Intelligence Section, to the Armed Forces High Command/Operation Staff, with copy to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy and to the Admiral detached to the Fuehrer's Headquarters as follows:

"The proposed organization was known from discussion with the Chief of Secret Intelligence Section, which may serve as foundation for conclusive discussions between the Chief of Armed Forces High Command and the Reichsfuehrer SS. With regard to the subject the Navy could not give any judgment up to this date. The Commander in Chief, Navy's opinion is, that the regulation planned by the Armed Forces High Command does not justice to the thoughts of Fuehrer's directive insisting on establishing a Secret Service.

Also in operational areas the necessary concentration of the reporting service is requiring its own SS organization into which the Services will have to build their professional groups. Commissioning and judgment of news acquisition will be advised to Armed Forces Head Quarters. Entire concentration of this secret reporting service in all professional groups will also be necessary in the executive offices of this organization. While continuing the Armed Forces organizations of military secret reporting service complete in itself only subordinating its top of the Armed Forces-High Command/Intelligence Division under the Reichsfuehrer SS does not allow the above mentioned demand on concentration of leadership and support in sufficient extent. Besides this, the organization planned by the Armed Forces High Command requires the navy's own new establishment of secret reporting service organization. But for this, sufficient personnel will not be available. Before conclusion the Commander in Chief, Navy requests opportunity for discussing these problems with the Reichsfuehrer SS."

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II. Army Situation:

The Army Group Manstein strives hard and with all its forces for stopping the further development of situation resulting from large penetrations during the last days. The situation is extremely serious.

Defense fighting of our own troops in the area of the Central Army Group now has been effective as usual.

The opinion of the Commanding General, Army Group North reported with the 6 March by the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command East referring to the situation on the Narva Front, has been confirmed.

The Commander in Chief, Navy orders the directive to the Naval Command East for transferring destroyers to Tallin in order to carry out coast bombardment in Narva Bay if required.

III. Quartermaster General.

In event of enemy landing operations on Iberian peninsula the Group West received the directive for checking in how far new forming up of two Naval Artillery Detachments could be carried through by means of saved materiel and personnel from the own area.

The Commander in Chief, Navy orders precipitation in establishing gun emplacements on the French west coast south of the Gironde.

IV. Not obligatory, the Chief of Transport Branch and General Jodl discussed the question of creating an office named Head of Sea-Transportation, attached to the Naval War Staff with Armed Forces authority (in given case 4.Div./Naval Staff).

Special Items:

I. The following unterances of the First Seaford given in a report of the shipping situation in the Houses of Common should be very remarkable:

"The total number of sunken merchantmen during the year of 1943 comes out far below to that one the greatest optimist ever dared to hope in the beginning of the year and comes to something more than half of the approximate estimate, which at that time we providently assumed. The last eight months average is lower than the level of 1918. Another example for the going down of submersions is the diminishing percentage of ship losses on the main routes in the North-Atlantic and the losses in the coastal convoys of the United Kingdom.

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In 1941 from 181, in 1942 from 233, in 1943 from 344 ships one each was lost.

Within the second half of the last year the losses in the convoys amounted to less than 1 to 1000 ships.

Alexander stated, that the turning point occurred within a few days after the 20 March 1943, where operations were fought out which perhaps may be counted to the decisive exploits of naval history of war. The losses of the Merchant Navy changed at once and no one may hardly exaggerate the fast change. Sometimes the Germans operated against one convoy with up to 30 boats. The boats were pulled down so seriously that practically they had given up the Northern Atlantic for several months.

Alexander declared no need of slacking, however, would have to occur and said that the Germans now probably would have at the least as many boats as in the beginning of the year 1943. During the first months of the passed year the submarines production would have made more than good the sinking and during the last time submarines often would have tried escaping from destruction in that way that they would avoid battle.

The Germans commissioned a new type of acoustic torpedo and further developments would be estimated. Probably the most striking proof, that Admiral Doenitz would endeavour to operate with more boats would be the fact, that in operational bases even more concrete pens would be built. Therefore one may anticipate with evidence that Doenitz would try a come back. We must prepare ourselves for the fact that the Submarines will try to transfer their area of activity into far distant waters just as they do now, for example in the Indian Ocean.

Reopening of shipping in the Mediterranean will be worth about one million BRT and the liberation of North-Africa in Italy yielded about 1/2 million BRT in effective shipping tonnage.

Up to January production of war ships in Great Britain was only a little less than in the past war.

Up to the end of the year production in merchantmen surpassed essentially the total production of the last war. Today the fleet is stronger than ever since the breakdown of France compared with the naval strength of our enemy. From convoys bound for Russia 13 British warships were sunk and in many a period there rose essential losses in merchantmen. 80% of all freighters however reached their ports.

From twelve Japanese blockade runners putting out to sea during the last twelve months only two reached the harbor and they too were damaged.

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The Navy's assistance in fighting the beachhead of Nettuno costed us the loss of two cruisers SPARTAN and PENELOPE, two destroyers JANUS and INGLEFIELD and five larger attack vessels. The total losses of the Royal Navy and of the Allied European Fleet in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the Sicily campaign amounted to two cruisers, one minelayer, ten destroyers, two submarines and ten smaller war ships."

Considering the situation of war in the Far East, Alexander declared:

"Naturally we must, even when now directing our efforts towards further preparations in Europe look beyond these events to the future where we will set about the Japanese with full power. When we will raise for the final striking against Japan, our naval forces will be the corner-pillar of our entire strategy and this will come out more distinctly than it was perceptible in the past generations.

II. Corresponding to the order of the Commander in Chief, Navy the Group North/Fleet Naval Command East, with copy to Training Unit Fleet Commander Destroyers and the Gunnery Inspectorate receive the following directive:

"The situation on the Narva Front may afford short-timed operations of naval forces operations in the Gulf of Finland in bombarding land targets from sea at every time. The Commander in Chief Navy desires that preparations may be pushed on energetically. Report the intended moment of firing practices and results. Early transfer of destroyers to Tallin and the execution of demonstration in the Narva Bay is desirable."

The Quartermaster General has been informed with the following directive:

"In the next time the firing on land targets may be become further important to naval forces. Therefore, all ships of the training unit, the destroyers and torpedo-boats have to be equipped with all improvised gunnery devices required. Carry through theoretical instructions. Provide firing practice in all bounds."

III. Concerning: Reinforcements of forces of the Commanding Admiral Defences East.

Strong minelaying in the western Baltic Sea carried out by enemy planes in the beginning of February showed the necessity of reinforcing naval forces of the Commanding Admiral Defences East. Four boats of the 5th Coast Patrol Force and four boats of the Admiral Arctic Coast having already been disposed to the Commanding Admiral Defences East and the

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1st Minesweeping Flotilla has been transferred to the Gulf of Finland there exist now no possibilities to withdraw more forces from other areas, if the tasks will exist which had to be accomplished up to now. - Therefore it has been examined what results may raise in event of withdrawal of one Minesweeping Flotilla from

A. Commanding Admiral Defenses North

B. Commanding Admiral Defenses West

Referring to A. Further reduction of naval forces of the Commanding Admiral Defences North with one minesweeping flotilla may only be possible with charge to the Rotterdam shipping.

Amount of traffic:

Weeklys average 1943: $3\frac{1}{2}$ convoys = 19 ships = 41,000 BRT

Weeklys average February 1944: $2\frac{1}{2}$ convoys = 15 ships = 32,400 BRT

With restriction respectively ceasing of this traffic the following set backs will occur:

1. Referring to judgment of the Reich Commissioner for Maritime Shipping:

a. The cession on Rotterdam and therewith on a port with highly efficient facilities of transshipment for mass products which at the same time is discharging the railway remarkably with its connection to a widely branched network of inland waterways. This cession would result important set backs to the whole transportation, the effects of which could not escape notice up to the details.

b. In event of the breakdown of German ports in the North Sea by minelaying operations respectively air raids, Rotterdam would cease to be a safety valve for shipping.

2. Referring to report of the Commanding Admiral Defences North:

a. As at this time Rotterdam shipping means discharge of traffic in the inner Heligoland-Bay suspension of this shipping would make transfer the focus of enemy minelaying operation and air activity into the Heligoland Bay which there would adequately afford much higher amount of forces.

b. Interruption of channel supervision to the Netherlands would shortly lead to entire blocking of these channels. Short-timed preparations are said to be as good as hopeless. Therewith, the following military tasks become particularly difficult:

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The transfer of destroyers, torpedo-boats, supply ships as well as transports to the West in event of enemy landing operations and the execution of planned minelaying operations in the south-west fortifications and off the Dutch coast.

c. The withdrawal of one minesweeping flotilla means cession to powerful vessels off the Dutch coast threatened by landing operations.

Referring to B:

In case that withdrawal of one minesweeping flotilla turns out to be indispensable, the Group West would propose the following:

1. Detailing of the 26th Minesweeping Flotilla (eight modern minesweepers) (Loire) or
2. A- group of the 40th Minesweeping Flotilla (six trawlers) (Brest).

Consequences:

Referring to 1: The minesweepers employed at this time with submarine escorts to far distant points must be replaced by trawlers. Restrictions would be inevitable to mine controlling off ports and on outer routes and coastal channels as well as to blockings of outer routes in event that AT-mines* would appear. Coincident execution of submarine escorts and precious Channel convoys would not be possible any more. The detailed boats will be obmitted as mine carriers for Blitz-barrages as well as for fighting operations in event of landing operation.

Referring to 2: The detailing of trawlers means restriction of mine control off Brest, Lorient and on the channels north-east and south of Brest as well as lack of escort vessels for Submarine open water escorts.

In case of threatening landing operations several patrol positions could not be occupied."

In case that relief of mining situation in the Baltic would not occur, there must be decided:

"If the upsets in sea shipping and training activity which occurred in the beginning of February would be so serious and long lasting that the reported important disadvantages referring to A. and B. would be taken into consideration.

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The present situation is still allowing to cancel this decision which at any rate would rise essential disadvantages."

IV. Concerning Operation "Tanne:"

1. Within the framework of preparations for the employment of task-force, the Naval Staff informs the Naval Command East, Group North/Fleet that referring to War Diary of the Naval Staff the anchorage of the Baltic Fleet on 23 September 1941 was Foegloefjaerd.

2. Referring to battery disposition the Admiral Netherlands reports:

"The time required for transfer of Dishoek battery until embarkation amounts to 14 days from issuing keyword. Earliest date of embarkation will be 31 March owing to obtaining of bed plate parts.

The Dishoek battery is one of the few batteries in which embrasur construction has been completed and the battery is ready for action with loopholes. Therefore withdrawal is undesirable also in regard to moral reactions. As substitute, battery Sluis is proposed, which in regard to caliber is but less strong, but as these are field guns, is immediately ready for action in operational areas. Insufficient direction only depends on limited space in loopehole construction. This advantage will cease in open bedplate construction. In case that substitute by 12 cm battery may not be bearable, one may suggest taking the Scheveningen-North battery which is still not emplaced and which in contrary to Dishoek-battery has the advantage of splinter-proof protection. In both the cases the time required from key-word issue will be eleven days and no restriction by manufacture. Owing to ordering with bedplates and because the bedplates of Scheveningen North will be fastened with concrete from 8 March, early decision is requested."

The Naval Staff decides:

Agree with reasons. Cancel Dishoek and therefore detail Scheveningen-North, Again reference to the fact that the battery has to be detailed with personnel, entire equipment and troop air defense."

3. Referring to disposition of battery the Naval Command Norway reports in answer of relavent proposal of Quartermaster General:

"Agree with Droebak and Randoe battery. Instead of Bolaerne we propose Selvenes Battery plus one gun. Time required presumably three weeks excepting the stay boltes, the production time of which in Norway is to be reported later on. We indicate that Droebak and Randoe consist only of three guns."

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The Naval Staff decides:

"Agree with Proposal. Dismount batteries immediately and concentrate them in Oslo. Be ready for call. Reduce time required in essential manner as matter is very urgent. Press urgently obtaining of stay boltes. Report on the execution."

V. On 5 March the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff/Foreign Affairs Section issued the following directive to the Chief of Operations Div./Naval Staff and the Chief of Air Force Operations Staff:

"Following numerous Counter Intelligence reports the enemy seems to concentrate tonnage and landing-craft space in the north-eastern Scottish ports and bays at present. Up to now no confirmations were submitted to reports on train restrictions and forming-up movements in Scotland. But, however, it may be possible that in connection with the situation in Finland the enemy may plan operations against the Norwegian coast. Now, it depends on the examination of these counter intelligence reports by air and naval reconnaissance especially in surveying and checking the area of the north-eastern Scottish ports from Firth of Forth up to inclusive Shetlands."

Concerning this the Naval Staff reports:

"Reconnaissance operations reported in reference will not be solved with naval forces.

1. Regarding to enemy superiority, possibilities for actions with surface forces not given.

2. Occasionally Submarines may but get precious reports in proceeding through the North Sea and the Approaches of the Atlantic but principally are not suited for reconnaissance tasks as

a. the single boat only has little horizon. For at least spotting a certain area to some extent the employment of a very great number of boats would be necessary.

b. If in action for reconnaissance tasks the boats will practically be missed in landing defense operations, as they can not reach the threatened area in time.

c. Placing the boats off and with visibility into enemy naval bases and ports will be impossible, owing to enemy sea and air supervision and minelaying."

Submarine Division, Group North/Fleet, Air Force Operations Staff Foreign Affairs Section, Armed Forces High Command/Intelligence Division

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Secret Intelligence Section, Army High Command/General Staff of the Army/Foreign Armies West will be informed with the above mentioned exchange of radiograms with reference to the special importance to fast transmission of all reconnaissance results indicating to enemy plans of landing.

VI. With the following radiogram the Naval Staff informs the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy, Commander in Chief, Air Operations Staff Naval Liaison and the Army High Command/General Staff of the Army Naval Signal Officer of the appearance of enemy PT-boats off AK Metschet and of the judgment on the situation resulting therewith:

"The Admiral Black Sea reports the appearance of PT-boats at 0900 on the 7 March off the port entrance of AK Metschet and the loss of the Crimea supply steamer CHARLOTTE (1591 BRT) at 0625 on the 7 March 50 miles west-north-west of Sevastopol by explosion (mine?). Connected with yesterday's Submarine sighting of 18 PT-boats south of Kerch-peninsula the possibility is offered that enemy operations may except serving the transfer of PT boats to Skadovsk respectively to Horly (west of Perekop), also simultaneously mean attacking our convoys and minelaying on our supply channels to Crimea. If both the ports would become operational bases for enemy PT-boats Crimea supply would be threatened seriously. Therefore the Admiral Black Sea demanded for strongest air reconnaissance by the 1st Air Corps as soon as weather conditions will permit. All the Crimea coast was sounded sea alarm.

VII. On 15 January 1944 Captain Prince of Borghese submitted a memorial to the Commanding Admiral of the German Naval Command Italy, concerning the possibilities of operations with the 10th MAS-Flotilla in consideration of all materiel available and of the strategic situation in the Mediterranean.

The Copy of the memorial, which in every way remains in the boundary of given possibilities was forwarded by the Naval Staff to the Group North/Fleet, Naval Operations Department.

Copy as per 1 SKL 648/44 GKdos Chefsache in War Diary Part C Volume XIII.

VIII. In presence of the Commander in Chief, Navy, discussion was held with Armament Departments on remote controlled rockets for naval war. The Naval Armament Department has the opinion that researches and experiments in this direction must be carried out in spite of long time of development being needed under certain circumstances in order to recognize whether the way now taken would be practicable or not.

The Commander in Chief, Navy pointed out that first need must be to reactivate sea warfare in shortest time. But this will only be

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possible with help of the new Submarines and the production of which does not be delayed. The Commander in Chief, Navy decides that researches and experiments will be executed in the proposed boundary.

Situation 7 March 1944.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The Naval Attaché Tokyo was informed that some days ago "KIEFER" had reported presumable arriving at Western France on 11 March.

In answer to a relavent inquiry, the Naval Attaché Tokyo reported that the Japanese Navy will agree with announcements on blockade runners to the press but requests that thereby details of loading places of blockade runners, their supply and the co-operation of the Japanese Navy will not be mentioned. Relavent information was forwarded to Administrative Staff.

II. Situation in West Area.

Enemy Situation:

The Admiralty announced the loss of the cruiser PENELOPE. Position of loss, off Nettuno.

Fifty-nine planes have been detected in operation over the Biscay-Bay. Seven British vessels have been detected in the in-coming escort area. According to statements of the Security Service the enemy is dropping agents, arms, ammunition and high explosives in not yet known extent in France since the beginning of March.

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

At 0855 minesweeper M "5405" was attacked with bombs and gunfire by a Mosquito plane off the approach of La Pallice and had to be beached near Ile de Ré. Afterwards, the boat sunk.

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In Nantes the new construction OSTERWIEK (600 tons) caught fire after explosion. The fire was extinguished. Cause not yet identified.

Three outgoing Submarines and two incoming Submarines had been escorted.

Channel Area:

Owing to moonshine, patrol positions were not occupied. For the same reason minesweeping was cancelled.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

From 0110 to 0135 the patrol position "ROM" and harbor defense boats off the entrance of Ymuiden were attacked by six or ten enemy PT-boats. Hereby in total two attacking boats have been sunk definitely, one is thought to be and three further boats have been damaged. Partially, our own forces suffered high casualties. One of the harbor defense boats was slightly damaged.

The mine exploding vessel "10" which was seriously damaged in striking a mine on 6 March sunk off Norderney at 1110. Off Borkum one mine was swept.

Four convoys with 44,000 BRT have been carried through in Zealand Waters and Zuider Zea.

Norway/Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 24 planes were detected. At 1027 contact with Qu P 26 broke off definitely in AF 1764. Now, the convoy is approaching the very air-threatened areas between Iceland and the Shetlands.

Air reconnaissance carried out for spotting ship anchorages off the East coast of Iceland brought no new identifications. Owing to weather conditions photographic reconnaissance yielded no result.

In the afternoon, one tanker respectively one steamer was reported on westerly course north and NNE of the Shetlands.

Own Situation:

On the forenoon of 5 March artillery duel took place in the area of Petsamo. At 1620 on the 6 March one vessel what was thought to be a

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submarine turning off to the West was sighted north of Bessacker. On 7 March newly suspected PT-boats were reported in AF 8543. In Foldafjord outlet one of our south-bound convoys was attacked by enemy submarine at 1120. Thereby the steamer LIPPE (8,340 BRT) was torpedoed and had to be beached.

During the air torpedo attack on the 6 March serious casualties were sustained on board the steamer "RABE" and damages on material were inflicted on board of the escort vessels.

At 0600 the Submarine operations against Qu P 26 were suspended. From 1000 the K-group was returned to normal readiness.

Submarines will advance to new positions between AB 7654 and AF 2248 on the line Jan Mayen - Bodoe.

Three boats are going to return.

The Submarine Division approves the proposal of the Naval Command Norway which is planning to send out own Submarines of the Central group against enemy submarines operating in the area of skerries of the Norwegian coast and releases at present two submarines for this kind of operation. Adequate directive see Radiogram 1500.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Enemy Situation:

Nothing special to report.

Own Situation:

Thirty boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances and 34 boats and six mine-sweeping planes in the Baltic Sea were engaged in minesweeping.

Escort duties have been carried out as planned and were only delayed in Baltic Sea Entrances owing to foggy weather.

Four armed fishing vessels of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla operated in escort duties between Aseri and Tyters.

"TOGO" arrived at Tallin.

At 1800 the mine carrier "RHEIN" and AF "32," "35," "46-50" were in passage from Libau - Tallin. Landing craft AF "29," "30-31" were lying in Libau and AF "37" in Stettin. Owing to bad weather AF "2," "5," "9"- "49" did not left Gotenhafen.

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Landingcraft B "6," "35" and WF "119" are lying in Pillau. According to dead-reckoning the net tender group was sailing off Stolpmuende at 1800.

The Narva-Bay patrol was carried out by four boats of the 17th Patrol-boat Flotilla, one boat of the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla and four armed fishing vessels of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla. Continuous attacks with bombs and gunfire against these naval forces were executed. Casualties were sustained, one patrol boat sprang a leak and had to be beached and abandoned later on owing to oil fire. Two attacking planes were shot down.

On the afternoon of the 6 March Kottka has been repeatedly attacked by strong enemy air forces, ten of the attacking planes were shot down.

Concerning the situation on the mainland from 6 February (?) the Admiral Baltic Countries reported of fierce defense battle southwest of Narva and of closing of the front gap near Gorodenka as well as withdrawal of our own positions west of Poruni. Owing to lack of forces the front-gap near Putkin, which was pushed open by heavily advancing enemies has not been closed yet. Fierce fighting is going on for the possession of Putkin. Hard defense struggles are carried out northwest of Krivasso against the enemy which is supported by tanks. Artillery fire getting the range and enemy movements pretend an attack on our own bridgehead west of Narva as imminent. From Hungerburg section gunfire and enemy grenade thrower activity was reported.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Enemy Situation:

Following Radio Monitoring one convoy coming from the USA was sailing on the 1 March at 0903 in the area 40° West. At the same day a convoy also coming from the USA was sailing at 1606 east of 40° West. From 3 March at 1501 respectively 1213 both the convoys received message to change their ports of destination respectively unloading ports for those ships which were Bristol Channel bound. It is assumed that these were the convoys H X 280 A and 280.

At 1355 on the 7 March one Azores-plane reported its position above a Submarine.

Own Situation:

The Group "Preussen" consisting of 15 boats occupied new operational areas between the degrees of latitude from AL 1590 and 8750.

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Submarine U "333" was sent to the North channel as operational area. Submarine U "178" is sent to JJ 4185 for meeting the U-Jt "22" on the 11 March in order to change over the wireless device. From the Indian Ocean no reports submitted.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area:

During the day several hundred twin-engined bombers with fighter escort penetrated into the Netherlands, Belgium and Northern France. Reports of attacks had not yet come in. Also in Western France busy flights with attack on Conches airfield was reported. In the afternoon-hours 60 Fortresses with fighter escort coming from the South penetrated into the area of Marseille and Toulon and dropped numerous high explosives on the harbor of Toulon. Two Fortresses and two fighters were shot down. Also, during the night of 7 March 30 enemy aircraft penetrated into the area of Marseille, Avignon, Montpellier. Attacks have not yet been reported. Coming from the West 100 enemy planes penetrated into the area of Caen, Avranches, Carentan where the marshalling yard and airfield of Le Mans have been attacked. Damages see situation of the day.

Reich Territory:

During the day no enemy penetrations had been reported.

On the day-raid on Berlin on 6 March, 463 of our own fighters and interceptor planes were in operation. One hundred and twenty-eight planes were definitely and twelve ones probably shot down paid with the losses of 37 own planes. From 128 planes reported to be definitely shot down, 108 were four-engined planes.

During the night isolated interceptor planes were reported penetrating into the Rhenian-Westfalian area of industry, three reconnaissance planes in the northwest area and one Mosquito plane via the western Baltic up to Stralsund and flying back via Berlin-Stendal.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 6 March enemy fighting activity in the area of the beachhead rose again as well as in the area of Rome and Viterbo. There were 450 planes in operation. In the Aegean six Marauder planes attacked the isle of Thyra and thereby lost four planes which were shot down.

Owing to bad weather conditions our own reconnaissance from Algiers to Oran was suspended on 7 March. At 1918 a convoy consisting of 32 steamers and four escort vessels were detected west of Oran steering ESE.

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Eastern Area:

Six hundred and forty six own and 476 enemy missions were counted on the Eastern Front on 6 March.

Five of our own planes were lost. Thirty one enemy planes were shot down. Operations of the 5th Air Force were already reported. Busy routine enemy flights were reported from the Norwegian coasts. Off Lister one enemy plane was shot down by antiaircraft artillery.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

A convoy consisting of 32 ships passed Europe point at 2045 on the 6 March steering to the Mediterranean. Two auxiliary carriers, eight freighters and one tanker arrived at Gibraltar. At 1700 on the 7 March a convoy consisting of 60 freighters and 18 tankers sailing West were reported to be off Punta Carnero steering a westerly course.

Own Situation:

The air raid on Toulon harbor inflicted no damage on Submarines and Submarine base. Fort La Malgue was hit by ten bombs. In the shipyard important damage was caused. The cruiser MARSSEILLAISE, the torpedo cruiser INDOMPTABLE, destroyer "GERFAUT" have been sunk, four battleships, one cruiser and four destroyers and one tanker have been seriously damaged. The town was well covered with artificial smoke screen.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring one USA-Mediterranean convoy probably Naples-bound stood for the area off Bizerta-Sicily during the night of 6 March. Our air reconnaissance at the landing area south of the Tiber was curtailed due to weather conditions. No special identifications were spotted by reconnaissance of the coastal forward areas. At 1435 two submerged submarines were sailing ten miles north-west of Pantelleria.

Own Situation:

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During the 6 March debarkations in Nettunia have been fired on by our own artillery. The minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landing craft left Spezia for minelaying operation.

The Admiral Adriatic disposed torpedoboat TA "20" to the German Naval Command Italy.

Submarine U "596" reported misfire on GUILIO CESARE in CK 7418. It had not yet been ascertained if that was the battleship or the steamer of the same name.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

The harbormaster of Split reports fightings with Partisans on Brac. Torpedoboat TA "20" has been transferred from Trieste to Venice. From a wireless message of the Admiral Adriatic was understood that from the 6 March three motor minesweepers in Pola are lying ready for going out to the South, Aegean bound. In case of favorable weather conditions departure is planned for 6 March at 1700 from Pda. Proceeding during the night up to the area of Trogir and in the following nights execution of minesweeping operation between the Dalmatian Isles. After that proceeding to Cattaro. After dawn sailing on coastal channels to the South through Otranto Straits to the Aegean.

b. Aegean:

Enemy Situation:

According to Counter Intelligence reports from the beginning of February the French battleship RICHELIEU still was detected in the Mediterranean in January, but, however, in the middle of February she was no more found in the eastern Mediterranean or African waters, so that her going off through Suez-Canal was assumed. A counter intelligence source in Beirut reported that some times ago LORRAINE has left Alexandria bound for another port in the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

During the enemy air raid on Pigadia (Scarpantos) two of our Arado planes were shot afire and a third one has been damaged.

At 0045 on the 7 March the three mines were laid by plane off the pier head of Syra.

The Group South reports:

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"The failure of air reconnaissance in the area of the eastern Mediterranean which was assigned to the Group South as operational area as well as the failure of sufficient agent reports from the Near-East and Egypt made rise far extending vagueness on enemy convoy shipping, especially from and to Suez. Supposing that submarines will be sent out on convoy channels in the area of Nil-Delta - Bengasi after stopping of deliveries from Great Britain to Turkey, it was therefore requested and inspired to transmit all sightings of our own Submarines in this area to the Group and to use their passage to and from for reconnaissance purposes.

The Quartermaster General requests information from the Army High Command, the Head of Army Armaments and the Commander Replace Army if the army could place at disposal 20 large assault boats as the high losses of ships in the Aegean proved the heavy danger for large vessels in action.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Both, one submarine was located SSW of Cape Sarych respectively 60 miles WNW of Sevastopol. The group of 18 PT-boats reported by Submarine U "24" could not be detected by radio monitoring and air reconnaissance. At 0900 one PT-boat tried to penetrate into the harbor of AK Mechet. The boat was met by naval landing craft and forced to surrender after short engagement. But in towing it into the harbor, she sunk. In connection with that fact the probability rises that the group of PT-boats reported on the 6 March may have tried to break through to Skadovsk respectively Ghorla.

This supposition was confirmed by first inquiry of the prisoners of the PT-boats. The annihilated boat lost contact with the group during the night.

Own Situation:

The planned operation of the 1st PT-boat Flotilla against returning boats of the enemy PT-boat group could not be carried through owing to bad weather conditions. The PT-boats are lying in immediate readiness. At 0625 the steamer CHARLOTTE probably struck one of our own mines in passage from Constantza - Sevastopol and sunk. The crew was rescued up to one man still missing. During the night of 7 March the patrol line in Kerch-Straits was occupied with three naval landing craft. In forenoon Submarine U "19" entered Constantza.

The towing convoy Sevastopol-Odessa was delayed owing to bad weather conditions. On the morning of the 7 March eleven naval landing craft coming from Odessa entered AK Metschet.

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In the afternoon twelve naval landing craft left AK Metschet Odessa-bound, but did not take any furlougher on board regarding to enemy situation.

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The alleged utterance of the Russian ambassador in Ankara rose to great interest saying that Moscow would be not interested in Turkey entering the war. The journalistic treatment of the Anglo-Saxon relations in the Russian press indicates to the same direction. Evidently the Russians are taking it more valuable that the Anglo-Saxons are standing off from the Balkans and that the Dardanelles remain closed for Allied ships than Turkish war assistance against Germany. A Russian military mission headed by a general arrived at Jugoslavia and took up contact with Tito.

Following the Daily Mail, the USA conjointly with Great Britain will intend to undertake diplomatic steps for restoring Allied prestige in South America. Economic and sea blockade of Argentina would be taken into consideration.

At present Turkey and Argentina are the diplomatic weak positions of our enemies. The first of them will be of direct importance for us because it will prevent an acute increasing of pressure in the South-East. But the Argentinian question will practically hardly obtain any effects for us. Its value to us will be at present in the atmosphere of prestige, unless the Americans would get induced themselves to operate in large scale military style. But this would practically be a measure which to the least would have to be effected against the British who to their part will dispute them the total influence in South America just the same as before.

But, at any rate both the cases Turkey and Argentina are showing how the proper interests of the Allies are partially going in a thorough muddle and against one another. Further examples for this will be offered by the Polish and especially by the Finnish question. Especially in regarding the latter, one will have to take into account that Finland to farther view will be interested to take up position in right time within the anti-Russian front from tomorrow for the future and inevitable British-Russian discussions unless she would be involved in the consequences of an alleged German defeat. From this it could be explained that even Mannerheim would strive to come off the connection with us as for this could be done in a to some what bearable manner. But for the last the Russian would cut himself into his own flesh if he would open this possibility by granting suitable conditions.

The Naval Attaché of Helsinki reports on the situation in Finland, that the Finnish memorandum for Moscow was transmitted for transfer to the Swedish Government. But this rose doubts that Moscow would take the answer as refusal and returned the communiqué to Helsinki. Concerning to further development there was assumed that if Ryti and Mannerheim

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and perhaps Tanner also would agree about a mode the Reichstag and the publicity will also follow.

Following a report of the Military Attaché at Stockholm leading Swedish military sources share the view that the Russians would intend to stir up strife between Germans and Finns with the demand of interning the German troops. Conditions would be unacceptable. After all, the Russians would have made difficult the establishment of agreement for example by publication of their conditions. And furthermore the Military Attaché of Stockholm reports of thoughts of the USA-Military Attaché who now as ever imputes to the Russians their following up the aim of world revolution.

The Weakening of Germany and of the Anglo-Saxons therefore would be in their interest. Therefore the Allies would be in no haste with the invasion. Detailed repetition of this report from the Military Attaché in Stockholm as per 1 SKL 0307/44 - Geheim in War Diary Part C Volume III.

The Commander in Chief, Navy, takes part on armament discussions in Berlin.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy, at 1730

I. The Quartermaster General reports that 7000 m of fuel had been disposed for Fleet's exercises.

Tests of with underwater floats of 90 tons will be started in the beginning of April and corresponding tests will follow with 300 tons-floats in the 2nd half of May.

II. Army Situation:

The big battle on the southern part of the Eastern Front against the Bug-position is lasting on with unabated violence. The enemy is advancing unhindered through the a 40 km wide gap east of Tarnopol and compelles our own divisions to take up hedgehog positions. Our own counter attack at Tarnopol could not reach its aim. The enemy thrust is aiming to Sereth. The Headquarters of General Fieldmarshal v. Manstein were withdrawn to Lemberg. The gap between the Army Group South and the Central Army Group augmented to 200 km.

The battle on the track Smolensk - Orsha is developing to lasting defense success of the Central Army Group.

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The enemy pressure against the Panther positions in the area of the Army Group North is lasting on. Situation is improved.

After long time active actions in the Kandalaksha section are seen on the Finnish Front, evidently being in connection with the political development.

Own forces are advanced from the North for reinforcement.

From one of our own Front-section in the landing area the Division Hermann Goering has been withdrawn. Other groups will equally be regrouped for reorganization.

Evident weak moment of Tito forces in the Balkans cannot be used owing to lack of own troops.

Special Items

I. Concerning Operation "Tanne":

1. On the 7/8 March the Captain (Navy) Rieve appointed as Chief of Staff to the Admiral Baltic Countries reported himself to the Operations Div./Naval Staff. As result of these discussions the operations Div./Naval Staff transmits the following to the Quartermaster Division:

"1. The Captain (Navy) Rieve reported on the 7/8 March to the Operations Div./Naval Staff that the disposition of twelve naval landing craft of the 12th Landing Flotilla are not sufficient for the operation Tanne. On the contrary it is rather necessary that for that task the whole 13th Landing Flotilla will be placed at disposal in order that the landing vessels and smaller boats belonging to the Flotilla could also be used of.

2. Regarding these discussions the Officer Personnel Department was requested to complete the appointment of the Captain Rieve in so far that Rieve will for the present and on a subsidiary basis remain Commander of the 1st Landing Division, as the Naval Command Baltic is planning to charge the 1st Landing Flotilla with the preparations for the task "Tanne".

3. Further arrangements concerning the participation of the entire 13th Landing-Flotilla will be ordered by Captain (Navy) Rieve in consultation with the Admiral Landingcraft and Bases."

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2. The Group West, Admiral Landingcraft and Bases, Naval Command Baltic Sea, Group North/Fleet, 1st Landing Division receive the following directive:

"1. For special tasks of the 1st Landing Division temporary operations of the 21st Landing Flotilla will be planned in the Baltic Sea.

2. Confirm immediately to the Group West that no doubts would raise against the withdrawal of the 21st Landing-Flotilla because the laying of Tschechen-Hedgehog (mine barrage) cannot be done with naval landing craft.

3. In event that the Group will not raise any doubts the Admiral Landingcraft and Bases has to detail the 21st Landing Flotilla immediately to Stralsund.

Appendix for Admiral Landingcraft and Bases.

Instructions may go on as before, after transfer of 21st Landing Flotilla.

The Quartermaster Division will be informed with the following appendix:

"Transfer of the 21st Landing-Flotilla is necessary because the 13th Landing Flotilla is required for the operation "Tanne" and the 21st Landing Flotilla has to take over the trainings tasks.

II. After report to the Commander in Chief, Navy, Quartermaster Division orders the use of the cruiser HIPPER:

"Referring to the decision of the Operations Div./Naval Staff with given restrictions the cruiser "HIPPER" is provided for front actions in the Baltic Sea until 1st November. Subordination under Commander Trainings Unit Fleet. The use of "HIPPER" for midshipmen will only be allowed in the bounds of the usual numbers for ships of the Fleet referring to consultation by phone of the Fleet Branch, Quartermaster Division with the Training Unit Fleet. The decision of the use of the cruiser from 1 November will follow in early time."

Situation 8 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

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Nothing to report.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group one, at the 19th Group 39 and at the Azores-Squadrons five planes were detected being in mission. In the in-coming escort area four British vessels were located.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

In total 14 mines were swept off the ports of the western coast. Three leaving and two entering Submarines were escorted.

Channel Area:

Owing to stormy weather and clear moon night the patrol positions were not occupied. Danish ships in tow on the Seine were attacked with gunfire by enemy plane. Fire damage was inflicted.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Owing to bad weather minesweeping and escort duties were partially cancelled. North of Juist one mine was swept.

The convoy 1229 Hook-Elbe consisting of seven steamers put to sea. The 9th motor minesweeper Flotilla transfers from Hook to Wilhelmshaven.

Norway, Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 22 planes were detected being in operation. In the afternoon air reconnaissance was extended towards the south-west

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coast of Norway and towards the Danish coast and in the evening it was directed to the North-Fiord.

2. Own Situation:

On the 7 March the following was reported: Penetration of eleven planes into the area of Petsamo and of one plane into the area of Banak, at 1725 air torpedo attack of two planes on the patrol boat "6115" northwest of Vardoe without effect.

Action brief report of the 61st Patrol Boat-Flotilla see Radiogram 2205.

The steamer "LIPPE" torpedoed by submarine and beached in Folda Fiord afterwards broke into two. On the 7 March and during the night of 7 March isolated enemy planes penetrated into the area of Bergen-Ohrestad - Korsfiord and Eggeroey.

Twenty-nine northbound and 31 southbound ships were escorted.

The Commander Submarines Norway submitted the conclusive summary concerning the fighting of the QP 26 from 4 - 7 March and also final conclusions on the fighting of PQ 30, QP 26. Copies as per 1 SKL 7261 respectively 7344/44 Most Geheim in War Diary Part C Volume IIa.

In these final conclusions the Commander Submarines Norway comes to the result, that the non-satisfying issues as well as the losses of boats occurred in the course of operations enforce himself to change the tactics. Regarding the enemy air reconnaissance it would be necessary to order submerged positions for Submarines during the day. Especially our own Air Force has to be so strong in numbers during the night and in the day before the advancing of the convoy into the area of the patrol line that all avoiding movements of the convoy and even extended changes of course could be certainly detected. Also, during the first night of the operation contact aircraft has to be in touch with the enemy in order to transmit direction-finding signs continuously. The Submarine line has to be set up and conducted in such a manner, that in the beginning of night the convoy would be in the direct neighbourhood approximating 30 - 40 miles off from the line. The first night will be decisive for the total result. In dawn the Submarines principally have to go far off and haul ahead.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

The air supremacy in Narva-Bay enforces the transfer of our patrol forces to west of Kunda-Bay during the day, because our own fighter escort is very insufficient. By so doing, undisturbed minesweeping between Namsi-shoal and Kis-Kolski Riff is made possible to the enemy.

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2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances there were 36 vessels and in the Baltic 38 vessels and six minesweeping planes engaged in minesweeping. Two mines were swept west of Laaland and one mine in the Kiel Bay.

Escort duties were carried out without any events.

The nightfighter directing ship TOGO and two boats of the 25th Minesweeping Flotilla occupy the area north-west of Vaindlo.

The mine carrier RHEIN and two tankers with AF "32," "35," "36" and "50" entered Tallinn. The group of netlayers escorted by two patrol-boats is in passage to Tallinn.

In doing rescue-work for the patrol-boat "1708" which was damaged by bombs, minesweeper M "459" run aground and is towed in to Tallinn.

The long approach for occupying the night positions in Narva-Bay is requiring faster vessels. Therefore the transfer of the 6th PT-boat Flotilla from Libau to the Gulf of Finland was ordered.

The 1st motor minesweepers Flotilla will be supplied as soon as the sweeping of the searching area near Goehren will be settled.

The 17th Patrol-boat Flotilla was withdrawn from Narva-Bay owing to almost too weak antiaircraft armament and will be sent out for escort-operations west of Tallinn.

On the morning of the 8 March feeble enemy air activity and in the afternoon stronger one was reported in the area of Tyters. Our own boats were attacked by groups up to 25 planes.

Regarding the situation on the mainland the Admiral Baltic Countries reported of increasing gunfire in Hungerburg section. On the 7 March the deep penetration north of Pskov was cut off. Our own counter attacks against increasing enemy strength in the penetration areas north of Gorodenka and northwest of Putki advance slowly. Near Kreski enemy tank attacks were repulsed. On Narva bridgehead and on the Western banks of the River up to Rigi the area is covered with drum fire. The town of Narva was destroyed by 3,000 aerial bombs during the night.

V. Submarine Warfare.

From the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, nothing special to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

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West Area:

In the forenoon stronger groups attacked airfields in the Dutch and Belgian area. The attacks are in connection with the large scale attack on Reich territory. In the evening, nine of our own fighter bombers operated on the British south-coast.

Reich Territory:

Between 1220 and 1715 several hundred bombers with fighter escort penetrated via Amsterdam - Hannover - Braunschweig - Magdeburg into the area of Wittenberg and Frankfurt/Oder and from there attacked Berlin from the East and South-East.

The attack was carried out in 6,500 - 8,000 m altitude in the time between 1325 - 1543. The main concentration was laid on industrial plants in Erkner and on the machine factory Schwarzkopf in Wildau in Teltow-district. Except this, airfields in the West of the Reich and then in the area of Berlin were attacked in approach. Except of Berlin another 35 places were attacked with gunfire and high explosives. According to reports available up to now 85 enemy planes were shot down.

Mediterranean Theater:

In Italy the main concentration of the enemy air activity was directed against transport installations in the Front area and in the beach-head. Bombs were also dropped on a section of Rome. By our own fighters four enemy planes were shot down under loss of three of our own planes. Further attacks were carried out by strong groups with fighter escort on airfields and traffic installations in the area of Viterbo and Florence. Harassing attacks with bombs were reported on Piombino and St. Stefano.

On the 8 March one enemy fighter was certainly and another probably shot down at the West coast of Corsica. At 1320 a convoy consisting of 25 steamers steering a south-easterly course was detected 160 miles north-west of Bengasi and north of Derna at 1222, another convoy of one transport and 26 steamers heading WNW.

In the dusk, 34 of our own bombers under escort of 22 Ju 88 C 6 were sent out against an eastbound large scale convoy in the Western Mediterranean. Only ten bombers arrived at the enemy at 1900 and reported hits on two transports and three freighters. Four of our bombers and

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two interceptor planes were lost. Two enemy fighters were shot down.

Eastern Area:

On the 7 March 645 enemy and 1227 own missions were reported on the Eastern Front.

With the loss of four own planes 30 enemy planes were shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1015 battleship WARSPITE left Gibraltar Mediterranean bound after monthlong stay in the harbor. At 1415 one CALEDON-class cruiser passed Punta Carnero with course to the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

The Group West reports details of the air raid on Toulon on the 7 March in the afternoon. Copy see Radiogram 0015. For the rest no special events.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring a convoy presumably KMS 43 reported between 1903-1908 to Algier the attack of twelve own planes. (Compare Aerial Warfare, Mediterranean Theater).

On the 7 March at 1430 two submerged submarines were sailing 60 miles south of Cannes steering South-East.

On the 8 March nine troop transports, four destroyers, eight escort vessels and ten or 15 landingcraft were detected off Anzio being engaged in relay traffic and also seven PT-boats respectively small craft were sighted within the patrol-line off the beachhead.

At 0800 four destroyers stood for 60 miles south of Ishia heading East.

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Reconnaissance in the coastal forward areas of Sardinia and Corsica was carried out in good visibility and yielded no result.

Regarding the two convoys between Malta and Bengasi report was already given under Aerial Warfare: Mediterranean Theater.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon of the 7 March and during the night of 7 March the harbor of St. Stefano was newly attacked. One plane was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery.

During the night of 7 the minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landing craft carried out a minelaying operation east of Capraia as planned. One harbor defense boat sustained damage on the east coast and is towed in: There is still no report on the execution of the minelaying operation.

Minesweeping on our own barrages south-east of Elba was continued with five minesweepers. Three battle ferries were damaged in the enemy fighter bomber attack on Porto Ferraio.

In patrol duties, on minelaying operations and escort there were engaged 34 war ships and 49 freighters in the night of 7 March. In spite of enemy supervision all movements were carried out as planned.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

One enemy plane was shot down at 0735 by one of our own batteries west of Cattaro.

The motor minesweepers R "188," "190" and "191" which left Pola on the 7 March were seized by air reconnaissance at 1850 20 miles south-east of the left port and attacked with bombs. Owing to disabled engines of motor minesweeper R "190" the three boats entered Lussin Piccolo on the evening of the 7 March.

On the 4 March the repair boat J "111" stranded in Dubrovnik approach in thick weather, suspected to be total loss.

According to counter intelligence report one motor sailing ship towing one vessel with 220 furloughers among them twelve of the Navy was

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captured by three partisan-vessels on the passage from Zara to Fiume on the 28 February. Twelve soldiers were killed in action, 24 wounded and brought to Povelia. The rest was transferred to Vis as prisoners. The 1st PT-boats Division reports of its main Headquarter for the 1st PT-Boats Flotilla and 3rd PT-Boats Flotilla to be in Palmanova in the neighbourhood of Udine from the 28 February.

b. Aegean:

A Motor sailing ship which put out to sea on the 3 February from My-thelena to Chios is overdue, presumably sunk by enemy action.

Three submarines were observed at the East-coast of Symi on the 7 March at 0230 by fishermen. Presumably that were PT-boats.

At 0200 on the 8 March the submarine chaser "2144" in escorting a convoy came in touch with three British PT-boats, which tried to capture the convoy in Turkish territory waters. One PT-boat presumably was sunk. Two men were taken prisoner. Later on still two PT-boats were in touch with the convoy on its passage to Rhodes. Advanced report see Radiogram 1000.

On the afternoon of the 5 March the convoy AGATHE was attacked by three enemy planes without effect.

After having done escort duties for AGATHE, torpedoboat TA "15" on her way back to Piraeus was attacked by one single air torpedo-plane twelve miles north of Iraklion at 1900 on the 8 March and sunk. Up to now 136 men have been rescued.

Out of six approaching Maraudern-planes four were shot down by our own fighters off Milos on the 5 March.

On the 8 March at 0030 in escorting the steamer BURGAS the minelayer "DRACHE" fought an attacking submarine. Submarine hunt was handed over to submarine chaser "2110." The steamer "BURGAS" avoided three torpedoes.

On the 6 March ammunition exploded in a battery which was not manned. Cause unknown.

At 0045 on the 8 March two enemy destroyers coming from the south opened fire on the town of Zante within a range of twelve miles inflicting no damage.

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c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In forenoon Radio Monitoring intercepted lively PT-boat movements on the central and eastern East-coast. Ten motor torpedo boats and two motor gun-boats were intercepted in wireless traffic.

On the 8 March our own air reconnaissance could distinctly spot into the harbors of Karkinitzki-Bay and Skadovsk and Chorli and sighted no enemy PT-boats. The final judgment on the place where the boats have left may only be possible after continuous spotting of the whole coast.

Own Situation:

There occurred no events in the patrol-line of Kertch Straits during the night of 7 March. During the night of 8 March the patrol-line will be occupied with four motor mine sweepers.

The convoys to and from Crimea were carried out without special events. Twelve landing craft coming from AK Metschet arrived at Odessa.

The following wireless message transmitted to the Admiral Black Sea was also taken down by the Coast Patrol Force:

"Inroad of the Russians near Schesterja, advancing of enemy tank spear heads up to Novy Bug together with transfer of Russian PT-boats to Skadovsk carried out nearly at the same time brings in given case earnest troubles regarding to the supply at sea.

In event that Russian rupture will follow threatening of Nikolaev and would expell this place for our use and the Russinas will see new possibilities for bases important endangerment would occure to the whole Odessa-Crimea navigation. This navigation will be fully cut down in event that Odessa would be suspended as port of departure for coastal towing traffic and naval landing craft navigation to Crimea. Reduced seaworthiness of the towed convoys and the lack of navigation aids on these convoys does only allow conduction of these convoys during fast changing weather conditions in close connection to the coast, achievement of oversea convoys only by absolutely clear and observable weather conditions, which at the other hand will also offer more chance of attack to the enemy. In case of not succeeding in avoiding the threatening danger from the Bug and Dneper estuary and in cutting off the ports north-west of Sund as presumable bases of light Russian naval forces there must perhaps be counted on decisive restrictions of the transport

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facilities of these towed convoys and small craft."

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

Regarding the Russian-Polish question Reuter reports, that Moscow is insisting on the fact that the Curzon-line would be registered as final boundary and refuses to discuss with the Polish Government in Exile.

According to Reuter the USA Secretary of the Interior declared, that the Arabian oil concessions would be necessary to the USA. The USA-reserves of oil would be used up faster than unlocking of new wells could be done. The USA-production would not be sufficient for the normal demands of the civil population in comparison to the war and armament amounts.

Conference on the situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy.

In a highly restricted circle:

I. According to informations on the part of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy shows little tendency to withdraw batteries already now from the Dutch area for the operation "Tanne."

II. Army Situation:

The total situation in the battle at the Army Group Manstein is extremely critical. The enemy started for the attack of Tarnopol. On the Narva-Front too, enemy pressure has increased.

III. The Group West submitted operational orders for reception of KIEFER by destroyers and torpedo boats, which is planned on the 8 March at 0800 in BF 8676. The Commander in Chief, Navy deems it not unobjectionable to push the rendez-vous point so far to the West because during their long approach the rallying forces offer enormous possibilities to draw the enemy to the protected object. This one ought to use its submarine possibilities as far as possible. Owing to advanced time it will be desisted from intervening in the issued order. However, relevant advice to the Group West and to the Submarine Division will be reserved.

Special Items.

I. Concerning the Operation "Tanne".

1. In summary the Naval Command East reports of the stand of

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preparations and plans. Copy referring to Radiogram as per 1 SKL 770/44 GKdos Cheisache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

The Quartermaster General and the Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff will be informed in copies with the advice to arrange for precautions revealing from the report.

2. The Naval Staff informs the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy of preparational measures as follows:

1. "Commanding General Armed Forces, Norway reports the demand of time from issuing the keyword until evacuation from Oslo to eight days.

2. Demand of time for naval batteries from issuing the keyword until evacuation from Oslo respectively Danzig to 21 days.

Supplement: Regarding to the long time required removal and preparations in the port of transshipment were ordered for the 7 March.

3. Report of the Commanding General Armed Forces, Denmark and of the Commander in Chief, Air Force were not yet submitted."

Thereon the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff op directs:

"Regarding to quieter judgment on the situation in Finland it is to desist of untimely removal of the naval batteries in Norway and the Netherlands. At accentuation of the situation the Armed Forces High Command will inform the High Command Navy in time.

The Commander in Chief, Navy received information and orders after consultation with General Jodl, that first of all the batteries have not to be removed."

3. The Naval Staff requests the General Staff of the Army/Operations Department for:

1. Disposition of one outfit of maps of the General Staff scale 1: 100,000 as well as of military geographical description of the Aland-isles for the 416th Infantry Division.

2. Immediate remittance by courier of both one dispatch of 1) to the personal address of the Commander of the 416th Infantry Division in Aalborg. The documents will be needed urgently for preparations.

II. Concerning the demonstration in Narva-Bay the Naval Command reports:

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"In case that the Army Group will have no other particular desires, execution will take place at day break of the 12 March in strength of three destroyers which will transfer to Tallinn until afternoon of the 11 March. Targets: Novaja, Bol Kosemiko, Gakkowo. In event that enemy batteries will be observed change the targets on these.

Expenditure of ammunition for each destroyer 100 rounds. As High Explosive detonators base fuse are not coming in question for this planned operation, there still remains the following stock aboard after having used the ammunition allotted: 12.7 cm 250 rounds of High Explosive nose fuse, 200 respectively 225 High Explosive nose fuse. It is referred to difficulties in ammunition supply, as there will be only available the following ammunition in this area of command for destroyers:

12.7 cm 485 High Explosive nose fuse, 415 High Explosive nose fuse with luminous composition, 120 star shells (all in Swinemuende), 15 cm Swinemuende:

Swinemuende: 20 High Explosive detonators base fuse, 941 nose fuses, 107 star shells. Gotenhafen 345 base fuses, 600 nose fuses. Decision is requested."

The Commander in Chief's decision will be precipitated on 10 March.

III. The Naval Command East informs the Naval Staff informatory of the order to the Training Unit Fleet concerning the precipitated execution of firing exercises on land targets corresponding to the directive of the Naval Staff.

Copy as per 1 SKL 7378/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

IV. During the week of 13 - 20 March the Commander in Chief, Navy orders discussions with the Commanding Admiral Group North/Chief of the Fleet, Commanding Admiral Naval Command Baltic Sea and with Commander Training Unit Fleet in Koralle-Headquarters. At this time the 14 March will be pretended for this discussion.

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V. On duty on 1 February 1944

446 Submarines

Losses in February

on the front 20

in home waters 3 23 Submarines

423 Submarines

Commissioned in February 19 Submarines

On duty on 1 March 1944

442 Submarines

Plus:

Foreign boats

on the front 4

in home waters 6

Detailed to Japan up to now 1

Number of Front-boats on 1 April 1944

1. Atlantic 107

2. Mediterranean 18

3. Northern Waters:

a. Operation 30

b. Central Group 3

c. Torpedo misfire 2

4. Black Sea 6

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Situation 9 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

Twenty eight planes on mission were detected over the Bay of Biscay. Three British vessels were located west and south-west of Ireland. At 2225 Radio Monitoring intercepted an aircraft message of the 19th Group on own forces in BF 5882. After having reported the sighting, the plane transmitted several coded wireless messages.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

The explosion on the seaplane OESTERVIEK may be traced back to thoughtlessness of shipyard personnel. One mine was exploded by fisher boats in the area of Lorient. Three entering and one leaving Submarine was escorted.

For receipting "KIEFER" torpedoboats T "27," "29" left Brest at 1300 and destroyers Z "23" and ZH "1" left Royan at 1600 as planned.

At 2118 the 4th Torpedoboat Flotilla reported contact aircraft and is trying to shake off the enemy by false courses which evidently was successful as from midnight further reports did not come in.

Channel Area:

Owing to rough sea and clearness of moon minesweeping was not carried out. For the rest no special events.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

During the day the convoy 1229 Hook-Elbe was lying in Helder and continued passage to the East at 1800.

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Minesweeping and escort duties were carried out on schedule.

In the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters five convoys with about 45,000 BRT were carried out.

On the 8 March at 1900 one one-engined plane was observed curving above the section of Brunsbuettel, evidently in special reconnaissance of the Kiel-Canal and the area of the locks.

Norway, Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group eight planes were detected in operation.

In Kola-Bay our own air reconnaissance stated in total nine steamers with 30,000 BRT and south of Fisher peninsula two coastal vessels.

One tanker of 8 - 10,000 BRT was sighted in the inner Eyja-Fiord at the north coast of Iceland. Besides this one seaplane-base with six or seven seaplanes was sighted on the south coast of the isle of Hwillely.

In reconnoitring Scapa by visual reconnaissance on the 5 March, there were observed three rigs of ten or twelve landingcraft each, among them type LCT 250 and LCG, but no landing ships.

2. Own Situation:

On the 7 March only little gunfire was reported from the area of Petsamo. During the night of 7 March the Battery Sensenhauer opened fire on three enemy boats in Soroeifiord. On the 7 and 8 March penetrations of eight respectively four enemy planes into the areas of Aalesund, Kristiansund North and Stavanger were reported.

Nineteen northbound and 24 southbound ships were escorted.

The Group North submitted provisional conclusions on the operations against QP 29. Copy as per 1 SKL 7386/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume IIa.

As to future operation it is written therein:

"a. Chances for Submarines will reduce furthermore with increasing and throughout clearness.

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b. In order to achieve successes actions with the utmost number of submarines is required. This may be reached in so far as to renunciation of fighting the QP-convoys and in operating only with a small number of boats on continuous survey at sea.

Then the focal point of reconnaissance must be shifted more than until now to the Air Force.

Only after spotting the convoy by planes the submarines may be sent out from the operational port and disposed in patrol lines mostly drawn up in depth echelons.

c. Especially important is the fact that Submarines may remain unseen in the patrol lines.

d. But without reinforcements of aircraft forces and long range fighters there could not be counted on very successful convoy fighting then."

There only could be agreed from the side of the Naval Staff with the conclusive judgment of the Group saying that the success in spite of fully appreciated tough and energetic Submarine operations with good support by the Air Force failed to come as the operational conditions were too difficult.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic-Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring the 5th Minesweeping Division, also the war vessels OE "13," R "16" and A "19," three unknown vessels and as well the Staff Fleet were intercepted in wireless traffic in the Gulf of Finland.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances there were 31 and in the Baltic Sea 23 vessels and four motor minesweepers engaged in minesweeping duties. Two mines were swept in Kiel Bay. On the evening of the 8 March minesweeper M "436" run ashore in the Great Belt.

In the Baltic Sea Entrances and in the area of the Commander (Minesweepers) East escort duties were carried out as planned. Nothing to report.

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On the afternoon of the 8 March and on the forenoon of the 9 March more enemy air raids were made on the patrol forces in the Narva Bay. On the boats casualties occurred. The patrol boat "1707" was damaged by hits in the boiler. On board of minesweeper M "204" the magnetic protection of the ship against mines was damaged. Our own boats shot down five attacking planes.

The patrol duties in the Narva Bay is carried out by the Commander of the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla with two boats, two patrol-boats and two artillery naval landing craft.

The 6th PT-boat Flotilla with KARL PETERS and six boats left Libau Tallinn bound. The group of netlayers in escort of two patrol boats is in passage from Libau to Tallinn.

The heavy gun carrier Westflandern, landing craft B "6," "35" and WF "119" entered Windau, AF "2," "5," "9" and "49" arrived at Memel.

The destroyers Z "28," "29" and "35" transfer from Libau to Tallinn on the 10 March.

Between 1830 and 2112 strong enemy air raid in strength of 250-300 planes was carried out on Tallinn. A second raid equal in strength struck this town between 0032 and 0300 on the 10 March. As far as could be seen no essential damage was sustained to the Navy. Heavy fires broke out in the town.

Regarding the land situation, the Admiral Ostland reported that own attacks on the 8 March gained terrain north of Gorodenka and the gap in the front west of Putki could be closed. The expected large scale enemy attack on the road Norwa-Jambury had been started. Out of 15 attacking tanks 13 were disabled by gunfire. One penetration near Lilienbach was made good. Again the Narva Banks from Narva up to Hungerburg are in our own hands.

V. Submarine Warfare.

At 2300 on the 8 March Submarine U "575" sighted two steamers and two destroyers in BE 8284 steering 10° with ten miles speed.

At 0154 on the 9 March the boat shot a Zaunkoenig* torpedo on a destroyer in BE 8228 and heard detonation after a 12.5 minutes' run.

In the Indian Ocean in JC 5451 the U I T 24 is waiting for supply by BRAKE. In connection with that submarine U "183" is to be supplied in the same area.

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VI. Aerial Warfare

West Area:

During the day about 60 penetrations into Belgium Northern France and about 20 into Western France were reported without attacking. During the night about 100 four-engined planes penetrated into the South East and into the area of Marseille and there partially dropped supplies for agents. One part of these planes attacked the air-field of Marignane.

Reich Territory:

For a new time Berlin was attacked by strong enemy forces during the hours of noon this time coming from the North-east and East. The effect of the raid on the eastern, southern and southeastern part of the town was more serious than in the two daily raids passed ago. However, the causes against the industry were comparatively small. In the south western suburbs essential damage was partially inflicted to houses. As owing to clouding own fighters did not start and our own interceptor planes remained on the ground because of the strong enemy fighter escort, defense was only carried out by antiaircraft barrage fire. The result of three definitely downed planes reported up to now is very moderate.

Mediterranean Theater:

On the 8 March 350 enemy planes were sighted above the area of the beachhead and Rome, two of them were shot down by antiaircraft artillery. Attacks were carried out on railroad installations, on roads into villages respectively in the area south of Firenze as well as smaller attacks against harbor targets and air ground organizations.

During the night of 8 March eight enemy planes carried out interceptor patrols in the central Aegean, one of them sank torpedoboat TA "15."

Eastern Area:

On the Eastern Front 1315 own and 750 enemy missions were counted on the 8 March. With the loss of six own planes 23 enemy planes were

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shot down respectively were destroyed on the ground.

Air reconnaissance carried out by the 4th Air Force in the Waters of Perekop and Odessa as well as in Danube estuary spotted no enemy PT-boats.

The amount of ships in Skadovsk and Tschurium-Peninsula was confirmed to be unchanged weak.

The Operations of the 5th Air Force was already reported.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

The CALEDON-class cruiser which was reported on the 8 March revealed to be a French cruiser of the EMILE BERTIN-class.

On the evening of the 8 March the battleship WARSPITE returned to Gibraltar evidently she has carried out trials run and left for the Atlantic on the morning of the 9 March. Simultaneously a convoy of 16 steamers with two aircraft carriers, several destroyers and seven corvettes passed the straits westbound to which "WARSPITE" was attached.

According to Counter Intelligence report from Vichy from circles of the General Nogues Allied preparations for large scale operation at the Channel are to be concluded. Troops are to be held ready for alarms from 3-20 March. The French resistance organizations received adequate orders. As first wave 30 divisions are to be provided for landing between Dunkerque and Le Havre. Simultaneously to this large scale operation small operations started from Corsica and Sardinia are to be planned at the coast between Toulon and Ventimiglia carried out by French troops.

Own Situation:

Off the French South coast one convoy of 200 BRT was carried out.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

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During the night of 8 March the USA hospital ship SEMINOLE sunk 60 miles north of Philippeville according to Radio Monitoring.

At 0640 an unknown USA-steamer scored torpedo or mine hit north of Tunis. Later the steamer reported abandoning ship. At 0237 our own air reconnaissance sighted in the eastern outlet of Bonifacio-Straits ten or twelve unidentified vessels, at 0347 two destroyers and one patrol vessel 15 miles south of Ponza and located ten ships 24 miles west of Nettunia.

In the area Anzio-Nettuno busy navigation was observed. On the 8 March one freighter was thought to be damaged by long range fire of our own batteries off Nettuno.

Own Situation:

New damage was inflicted in the harbor of St. Stefano in the air raid on the 8 March. One plane was reported to be shot down. Not three but two ferries were damaged in the raid on Ferrajo on the 8 March. One plane was shot down.

On the evening of the 8 March the minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landing craft were attacked by enemy planes without effect on its passage from Leghorn-Spezia.

After execution of mine operation two harbor defense boats rammed each other east of Ravenna. After fruitless attempts to tow them off one of them sunk.

Owing to weather conditions mine operation and minesweeping tasks south-east of Elba have been suspended during the night of 8 March. With the date of 7 March the transfer of all PT- and motor mine-sweeper boats to Venice on the River Po is carried through. The transfer of the barges and naval landing craft has commenced.

Submarine U "371" and U "343" have been detailed in new operational areas off the beachhead.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Nothing to report.

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b. Aegean:

Details of the sinking of torpedoboat TA "15" see under Radiogram 1950. Total loss of about 30 men.

According to reports of the Assault Division Rhodes from the 8 March two combined operations-boats in passage from Rhodes to Xoos have been captured by the British as statements of the population of Misero revealed.

At 2130 on the 7 March enemy commando-raid on the observation post south-west of Calino was repulsed.

During the bombardment of Zante in the night of 7 March unimportant damage on buildings was inflicted.

Regarding the report of the Group South concerning the transmission of submarines observations (see War Diary 7 March) the Group South was informed by the Naval Staff that the Commander Submarines Mediterranean has got the directive on the 15 February to inform the authorized Flag Officer on the current submarine operations. Therefore the transmission of reconnaissance results of the Submarines may be requested directly by the Commander Submarines Mediterranean within the limits of possibilities.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Our own air reconnaissance can not give any rough guide on the fact where the enemy PT-boats have been disappeared. At 1900 one Submarine was located 80 miles West-south-west of Sevastopol.

Own Situation:

Normal readiness was ordered in the area of Crimea Coast.

In regard to the overheard wireless message of the 10th Coast Patrol Force the Admiral Black Sea (see War Diary 8 March) there was stated by phone that the Group South is of the same opinion as the Commander of the 10th Coast Patrol Force.

The decisive change of the situation in the Black Sea being imminent may partially be caused to the following factors:

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1. Appearance of light Russian naval forces in the waters north-west of Crimea

2. Threatening of the land connection of the Ukrainian coast (Nikolaev-Odessa) by the movements of the land front in the area of Vinnitsa-Tarnopol.

No clear imagination could be gathered where the Russian motor torpedo boats would have disappeared from which one has been sunk off Ak Metchet. But it must be counted on definitely with the fact that they stayed in the area of Skadovsk Horli and will operate from there against the Crimea supply.

The break down of Odessa as basic point for towed convoys may be caused by the appearance of the Russian PT-boats. There may be added that with interruption of the rail communication to Odessa this harbor at the least may suffer considerable set back generally as basic point for Crimea supply, so that the longer route from Constantza with its relavent slower circulation of ships only may remain. There may be added that the shipping between Odessa and the Roumanian ports will presumably be highly frequented for evacuation of goods and troops from the Ukraine or perhaps for reinforcements in this area, too.

All these factors may impair the navigation which is required for Crimea supply so seriously that hitherto the judgment of the Naval Staff on the question of Crimea supply may exert a fundamental influence upon.

VIII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Following British press informations from Stockholm there is announced by good informed circles that the Finnish counter proposals transmitted on the 7 March held the door open for further negotiations. According to reports of the Naval Attaché Helsinki from the 9 March the answer read in the contents as to information of the German ambassador as follows:

Point 1. would be difficult and complicated, but the Finnish Government does not in the whole refuse discussions on this point. The other points could not be approved but however, the Government would be willing for discussions going into details. The point 1. is dealing with the question of relations to Germany.

On the occasion of the burial of the late president of state Svinhufved the strong desire of resistance which may correspond with the attitude of the majority of the Finnish people was expressed.

The "Times" is writing on the question of the Italian Fleet: Russia has strengthened her squadrons in the Northern Waters with these Italian ships but has not formed up a squadron in the Mediterranean. But the Italian ships however, would hardly be suited for northern zones. Therefore the Allies would plan to compensate Russia by handing over ships of their own reserve stocks which would be better suitable for these waters.

Following announcements of the USA Ministry of Foreign Affairs negotiations are still going on with Spain on behalf of the embargo of tungsten shipments to Germany and other questions. But in meantime the exportation of lubricating oil has been suspended however.

Following Reuter, Ramirez announced his renunciation to the presidency of Argentina. In Washington one is doubting that Paraguay, Chile and Bolivia may unite with Argentina in customs union.

The "Times" is reporting from Ankara concerning the Anglo-Turkish relations that there will be hope for new touch between both the Governments.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy.

I. The Chief of Coastal Defence Branch, Quartermaster Division reports on the thinning out of the amount of ships in Gotenhafen and Danzig. The precautions were carried through as far as ever possible. But it cannot be changed that boats in the dockyard which are not

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ready for sailing may still have to lie together in packages. Further report is made on antiaircraft protection of the Kiel-Canal on which the Navy is devoted to. A reinforcement in numbers may not be necessary but definitely will be a fact of modernization of calibres. The Quartermaster Division is examining what may be done in this direction.

In a highly restricted circle:

After report the Commander in Chief, Navy approves the proposal of the Naval Command East concerning the demonstration with three destroyers off the Narva-Bay (see War Diary 9 March).

The Naval Staff transmits the agreement to the Naval Command East by telegram 1 SKL I op 9236/44. Copy in War Diary Part C Volume III.

Army Situation:

The enemy continues his offensive operation in the southern section of the Eastern Front with undiminished strength. Our own positions partially were pushed back. The battle around Tarnopol is lasting on.

Only unimportant fighting took place at the Central Army Group.

The enemy reached a penetration into the Narva-Front within the area of the Army Group North which however, could be absorbed by own counter measures.

Enemy attacks in the area of Aprilia on the Italian Front were repulsed. Shipping concentrations off the beachhead were shelled by own army artillery.

Special Items:

With the 7 March the Commander in Chief Navy ordered, that the appointment Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff in the High Command, Navy will from now be changed in name into "Chief of Naval Staff in the High Command, Navy" as this notation hits better the task and position of the former Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff corresponding with the notation of the other chiefs of departments in the High Command.

From now the Commander in Chief, Navy bears the designation "The Commander in Chief of the Navy." With this designation is clearly

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expressed that the command of the entire Navy and consequently the conduct of the naval war too, is lying in the hands of the Commander in Chief, Navy.

II. Concerning the Operation "Tanne."

1. On proposal of the Commander of the 416th Infantry Division this division will not be shipped from Aarhus but from Aalborg.

2. The Naval Command Norway, the Admiral Netherlands, with copy to Naval Command East receive information from the Quartermaster Division that that referring to new directive from the Armed Forces High Command the batteries in Norway respectively the Battery Scheveningen North will at first be let staying in the area and will only be made ready in speed for immediate other operations.

III. Concerning the Kiel-Canal the following directive was issued from the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff.

"1. The sufficient protection of the bridges of the Kiel-Canal which are important for transportations to Denmark and Norway and in reverse will rise to decisive importance in event of enemy landing operation. There must be counted on that the enemy may try to destroy these bridges from the air and by sabotage (air landing commandoes) not only in the event of landing but already much earlier.

The protection of the bridges against air raids and attacks from the ground must therefore be strengthened at once."

2. For this reason the Fuehrer ordered:

a. The protection of the Kiel Canal and its bridges is transferred in responsible manner to the High Command, Navy/Naval Staff.

b. In order to reinforce the forces being available for protection the railway bridges of Rendsburg and Hochdonn are to be guarded by forces of the Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police.

c. From the bridges which are crossing the Canal, increased importance in transportation is due to the railway bridges near Rendsburg and Hochdonn.

d. The High Command, Navy, the Commander in Chief, Air Force and the Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police report on the execution of this order and on the forces which are committed in protection of the Canal and its bridges.

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e. In event of enemy landing operations, the Chief of the Bureau of Army Armament and the Commander Replacement Army prepares the reinforcement of forces committed in protection of the bridges with replacement and training units of the military area X. The forces provided for additional actions are to be reported to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff.

The Naval Staff is examining the precautions hence following this directive especially the question if its total execution will practically not be transferred to only one Chief Command, though the Canal touches both the areas of the Naval Commands North and East.

IV. In event of enemy landing operation on the Iberian peninsula the Quartermaster Division gave the directive to the Group West, that the preparations ordered by the Quartermaster Division on the 18 May 1943 are to be resumed and ordered heretofore that besides allotment of the required naval forces also material and personnel for establishing naval bases including the coastal artillery defense are to be put at disposal. As in the present scarcity, the detailing of personnel and material for this task would be impossible for longer time both the subjects are to designate only in provident manner.

In total six 38.1 cm, three 15.5 cm, 18 to 19-15.2 cm, eight or ten 15 cm and four 10.2 cm guns are coming in question for manning with German personnel.

Besides this, the Quartermaster Division intends to provide at first a number of batteries including personnel from the area of the Group West for operations in Northern Spain which could be erected and removed quickly. For this the following batteries are provided: Oye Plage, Longnes, Cape de la Chevre, Landemer and La Coubre West with five 15 cm each of type K and SK.*

As to personnel for coastal defense the initial organization of at first two entire Naval Artillery Detachments including the batteries above mentioned is deemed to be necessary, the designation of which is to be executed within their areas by the Group West as at this time reinforcements of personnel from the home front or other areas are impossible.

Also the rest of personnel, Area Commander (base for naval warfare) also will be provided from the area of the Group. To these dispositions there may be underlined, that in event of enemy large scale landing operations the withdrawal from Channel coast and from the northwestern French coast will be taken into consideration. The Group West is ordered to prepare an adequate proposal of organization

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in the nearest possible time. The operation is named with the code-word "Gisela neu".

V. Regarding to the directive of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff from the 28 December 1943 concerning preparational precautions for enemy large scale landing operations and the measures of the Naval Staff (see War Diary 26 January) thereby released, the Group South ordered an examination of defense preparations in its own area. Thereupon the Admiral Black Sea raised a number of demands which were agreed by the Group South and submitted for decision. The introduction of both another PT-boats and motor minesweeper Flotilla to the Black Sea which was proposed hereby, was refused by the Operations Div./Naval Staff with the date of 8 March as the present strength avoids the execution. The remaining items will be checked by the Quartermaster Division insofar as the possibilities of fulfilment may be given at present. They refer to the quick production of the KT-submarine chasers, artillery ferry barges and boats of the 22nd PT-boat Flotilla being in construction, to the quick commissioning of CB-submarines* under German colours and with German crew, to quick transfer and commissioning of the Submarines of Type XXIII, strengthening of KT-chasers' armaments, further to the increase of anti-aircraft armament in the ports of the Western coast to development of the coastal artillery in Transnistria, Roumania and Bulgaria, to the supply with ammunition, barrage balloons, smoke devices as well as to the operation of the army coastal artillery in the Roumanian and Bulgarian area and to the development of basic points in Burgas and Varna as well as to the installation of the Radar organization and the communications and finally to the allocation of mines.

Besides this, the Group South reported its intentions in case of Turkey giving up her neutrality.

The whole correspondence is found as per 1 SKL 700 respectively 701/44 GKdos Chefsache in the documents 1 SKL I op.

VI. Preliminary the Operations Div./Naval Staff informs the Group South that it is planned to construct assault transports and that the introduction of both a battalion of landing engineers to the Aegean and Adriatic was carried into effect as immediate measure by the Armed Forces High Command and that support of the Armed Forces High Command was promised in immediate comprehension of motor sailing ships. The deliveries of the naval ferry barges, naval supply lighters and of the Siebel ferries at the right date, will be surveyed by the Quartermaster Division. Regarding the question of these fixed terms, the

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Quartermaster Division pointed out that in consequence to various delays in construction caused by enemy action and difficulties in supply from the Chief Committee for Naval Construction for the second serie of the artillery naval ferry barges, which originally were to be constructed referring to the Fuehrer's directive with the end of March the following fixed terms were now named: ten in March, 13 in April, seven in May.

VII. The Quartermaster Division/Submarines informs the Operations Div./ Naval Staff of the following promulgation to the Commanding Admiral Submarines referring to the management of the Italian Submarines the assumption of which in its time was planned from the German Navy in consequence of the discussion with the Italian Under-Secretary of State:

1. "The CB-Submarines* in the Black Sea (six) will be handed over to the Italian Navy. Complements by men of the 1st Italian Naval Division (Captain (Navy) Grossi) Operation under the command of the Admiral Black Sea.

2. CB-Submarines in the Adriatic will furthermore be constructed. In given situation there is intended on the part of the Commander in Chief, Navy to make manning these small boats with the 1st Italian Naval Division (Captain (Navy) Grossi). Operation under German Command.

3. The same as under 2. applies to both the Submarines of 80 tons in the Adriatic.

4. "BEILLUL" and another Submarine for special purposes of the Italian 10th MAS-Flotilla will be transferred to the Italian Navy and manned by Italian crews of the 1st Italian Naval Division. The special service submarine will be put at disposal from the Italian Navy on request of the German Naval Operation Division. Both the boats will be employed under German Command.

5. The six transport Submarines' new-construction remain German, compliments will be set up by the Commanding Admiral Submarines. The Submarines will be set under command of the Commander Submarines Mediterranean. All preparations for the assumption of the six transport-submarines have to be made on part of the Commanding Admiral Submarines.

6. On the request of the Group North/Fleet in putting at disposal further three Italian Submarines for special training (Schweine) will be seperately decided.

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VIII. On application, the Quartermaster Division informs the Group South referring to the allotment of remote controlled landing-PT/boats of the Division Brandenburg, that these boats are not yet ready for front use. Their front tests in the Baltic Sea will be carried out soon by the Naval Special Operations Unit in consultation with the Division Brandenburg. Following the opinion of the Naval Staff the remote control target Platoon of the Division Brandenburg previously will not be able to carry out operations from PT-boats of the 1st E-boat Division against moving enemy targets. In case that operation will nevertheless be ordered, there exists the great danger of compromising this weapon which only promises success in mass operations against profitable targets after thorough training and naval experience. Discussions referring this subject between the Naval Staff and the Armed Forces High Command/Counter Intelligence respectively with the Division Brandenburg are not yet concluded.

IX. The Naval Intelligence Division/Naval Staff reports on:

1. British naval forces in the British home area. Copy as per 1 SKL 6170/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume "materiel on the enemy situation". The summary comprehends battle ships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and escort destroyers as well as PT-boats. It is counted on five battle ships, four aircraft carriers, eight heavy, 15/20 light cruisers, 120-140 destroyers and escort destroyers in home area.

2. Stock of war ships in the Mediterranean. Copy as per 1 SKL 7210/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

3. Enemy situation in regard to the summary of enemy situation issued by the General Staff of the Army from 9 March. Copy as per 1 SKL 7519/44 GKdos in War Diary Part D Volume "Records on enemy situation".

X. Report of the Naval Attaché Ankara on the Turkish Fleet and coastal defense from 14 January (1 SKL 2797/44 Geheim) is included in War Diary Part C Volume XIV. a.

Situation 10 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

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1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In Radiogram 1741 BRAKE receives the following message:

1. "After supply of the three boats on schedule, approach the point which lies on the same latitude as "HECKE" and 11^o more to the South.

2. Strive to reach new point as soon as possible. There is waiting "U-Pahls" since the 10 March. MERCATOR-boat.

3. On the 19 March the arrival of U- SCHNIEWIND must be counted on. Then afterwards shear off to the South East. Orders on further supply will follow.

4. Boats standing for the vicinity of the 1st meeting point reported nothing suspicious up to now."

II. Situation in the West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 19th Group 48 planes which partially developed busy communications in connection with the escort of "KIEFER" were engaged. Seven planes were detected at the Azores Squadrons. One Radio guard was located in the western Gulf of Biscay and one British vessel was located west of Ireland.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

At the operation "KIEFER" the pair of the 4th Torpedoboats Flotilla shook off enemy contact aircraft successfully during the evening of the 9 March by practicing false courses. In rallying "Kiefer" in the morning at 1045 in BF 8659 the two destroyers were detected by enemy air reconnaissance. At 1056 the convoy was attacked with bombs. According to Radio Monitoring enemy contact lasted until noon. In

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consideration to enemy situation the operational plan was changed and the ships took the short route via point one. The greater risk for mines resulted herewith will be taken into consideration. The Air Commander Atlantic supported the bringing in of "KIEFER" by strong effort of his forces. Thereby aerial fights were fought out with Mosquitos and Beaufighters. Until the end of this day the passage seemed to have passed as planned.

Four incoming and seven entering submarines were escorted.

During the night of 10 March the transfer of the 5th and 9th PT-boats Flotilla is prepared. From there the flotillas ought to be put into operation against eastbound convoys off Wolf Rock.

Channel Area:

During the hours of noon the Channel batteries shelled located targets. According to Radio Monitoring enemy motor boats were at sea in the area of Calais. One mine was swept off Cherbourg.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

At 0245 the convoy 1229 Hook-Elbe was attacked by enemy PT-boats in the area of Tershelling and Ameland. The attack was repulsed without sustaining own damage. In a new attack at 0430 one tug was seriously damaged but could be towed into Borkum. The convoy was carried out as planned.

The convoy 486 Elbe-Hook with five steamers was started at 0800.

Owing to rough sea minesweeping and clearance work was partially suspended at the Dutch coast, north of Tershelling. Two and one mine was swept off Hook.

The mine exploding vessel "27" was attacked by enemy planes in the area of Borkum and sustained casualties.

Five convoys with about 54000 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Zee and in the Zealand Waters.

The 9th motor minesweeper Flotilla with the Commanding Admiral Defences North aboard carried out exploratory sweep to Esbjerg.

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With the 19 February the Naval Command North reported in reference to the laying of coastal mines type A-barrages. For the minelaying the Naval Command asks for at least ten naval landing craft (both, four for the Dutch coast and Danish West coast and two for the Heligoland Bight) for about six or eight weeks. The execution of the planning should be imposed to the Commanding Admiral Defences North. On the 5 March the Naval Command North submitted the condensed planning of mining operations of the Admiral Denmark with his own judgment for the Danish west coast.

The Naval Staff approved the proposal of the Naval Command North and ordered the production of the 240 coastal mines types A which were additionally required. The Naval Staff proposes to lay out the barrage 2 e not in a straight line from Nordmannstief but in sinuous manner in the fairway. The demanded naval landing craft for laying out the coastal mine type A-barrages would not be at disposal. The Naval Command North must strive for emergency solution in the Denmark-area with combined operation boats or towed lighters and has to take up contact with the Group West on temporary transfer of ferry barges or motor minesweepers for the Netherland-area.

Norway, Northern Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group there were 23 planes detected over the central and northern North Sea up to the Norwegian coast.

2. Own Situation:

Towards noon ten enemy planes were reported in the area of Bergen, towards 1810 three mosquitos were reported in the area of Stavanger, Kristiansund which did not attack.

Twenty one northbound and 37 southbound ships were escorted.

The Commander Submarines Norway reports that on the 15 March previously ten from the 20 March 13 from the 25 March 17 and from 1 April 20 Submarines would be ready for operations. At present the Commander Submarines Norway has 25 boats and two test-boats at his disposal for operational effort. By means of a system of short termed repair work by a repair ship there is tried to have the utmost strong number of boats at disposal in case that convoys may approach. But this kind of short repair may lead to the fact that the boats may be strongly worn out in the course of time and then break down for longer time. For this reason the Commander Submarines Norway deems it necessary to have

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a supply of boats at the least to have a substitute for losses which occurs if in further time the convoys should be seized with considerable forces.

The Hydrographic and Meteorological Division reported on the planning of the automatic weather transmitter Gerhard in 76,5° North and 65,5° East (Novaya Zemlya). The transmitter worked from 28 August - 30 October 1943. That is to say 70 days in immaculate manner and could be heard regularly from the 30 August. From 248 broadcastings 56% could be taken down clearly. Under present technical wireless telegraphy conditions in the Northern Area the receiving result is said to be satisfactory.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

There were 28 boats and 3 minesweeping aircraft engaged in minesweeping in the Baltic Sea Entrances, in the Baltic Sea 31 boats. Off Aarhus two mines were swept and in the Great Belt one mine was swept. In doing escort duties on the afternoon of the 9 March the supply ship TIEFLAND struck Submarine wreck off Swinemuende and had to be beached.

In the air raid of Tallinn on the 9 March the minesweeper M "3115" was slightly damaged. The patrol-boat VP "1708" which was damaged in the airraid on Narva Bay was towed into Tallinn and beached. The patrol positions in Narva Bay were occupied by four boats of the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla, two patrol boats, four armed fishing vessels and two artillery ferry barges.

The patrol boats were attacked by enemy planes at 0645 and 0745 off Kunda. Two planes had been damaged in approach. The anti-aircraft fire forced the 30 resp. 18 attacking machines to emergency dropping of the bombs. In the course of the afternoon air raids on our own patrol boats were reported. Damage was not reported. There were busy enemy air activity over Tyters. Due to gunfire the planes were forced to drop their bombs in emergency at sea and on the island.

The 6th PT-boats Flotilla with CARL PETERS entered Tallinn - Kopli. The mine-carrier RHEIN entered Palkiski. The netlayers "19" and "26" with six working boats stood in passage from Libau to Tallinn.

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In the enemy air raid on Tallinn on the 9 March the Naval Food Depot sustained hits in the engine room. Moreover there were hit some barracks, the Air Raid Precautions headquarters and the hospital. The garrison administration sustained building damage, the port storehouse was destroyed to 30% and the wood wool storage was totally destroyed. The 2nd Battery of the Naval Antiaircraft Detachment 711 received direct hit. Seven or eight attacking planes were shot down by antiaircraft artillery and eleven ones by night fighters. The ammunition of the Air Force antiaircraft artillery, which exhausted its ammunition in short time could be filled up by the Navy.

The coastal PT-boats provided for Lake Peipus are ready for loading in Kiel four ones each on the 15 resp. 23 March.

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. According to information of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping there must be counted on the following shipments in March:

"The amount of shipping space for the Armed Forces Supply and the supplies of the war economical industries in Norway comes to round about 433 000 tons.

For the supply of Finland 16 300 tons are required while 50 000 tons have to be transported to the Ostland plus the rest of hay and straw.

In the German coastal shipping (without coal) there are to transport 78 - 103000 tons in both directions.

In the coastal coal traffic there are to be shipped 201000 tons and in addition further quantities from Rotterdam referring to shipping performances.

From Oxelisund about 150 000 tons of ore will be collected."

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff set up a survey of the enemy losses of merchant ships from 1 September 1939 to 31 December 1943. Copy in reference Operations 1 SKL 5373/44 GKdos in War Diary Part D, Volume "Enemy losses in merchant shipping". These arose to in total 31 253 084 BRT, thereof 17,4 allotted to the British flag and 4,8 million GRT are fall to the USA. Thereoff about 16,5 million BRT are allotting submarine performances 4 million BRT to the Air Force, to surface forces about 1.76 million BRT, to mines 1.39 million BRT. The Japanese and Italian results amounts to altogether about five million BRT. The numbers named are checked cyphers of losses.

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VI. Submarine Warfare.

At the Group "Preussen" the Submarine U "255" seized at 2200 on the 9 February a convoy steering in AL 1771 and is thought to have sunk a destroyer with Zaunkoenig torpedo.* Returning to home base the Submarine U "845" sighted on the 10 March a convoy steering 20° in BE 1960. The Submarine U "653" operating in direction of this report seized at midnight of 11 March a group of destroyers steering 20° in BF 2451 and sunk a destroyer with Zaunkoenig torpedo.* At 2217 the U "575" sighted one destroyer in BE 4956. At 1655 the Submarine U "625" reported heavy damage and sinking from AL 8521. Two boats from the vicinity are sent out for rescue work. Among these boats which were in passage to the place of accident, Submarine U "256" was attacked twice by planes.

On the 9 March the Submarine U "183" sunk a tanker of 5000 BRT in the Indian Ocean in LN 2726.

VII. Aerial Warfare

West Area:

From the day no essential reports were submitted. During the night of the 10 March several hundred enemy planes approaches had been reported. Air-fields and anti-aircraft emplacements had been attacked. The aircraft repair shop Bloch within the airfield of Chateauroux was seriously hit. But in spite of heavy damage the airfields remained approachable.

Reich Territory:

Only isolated enemy approaches were reported during the night. In the evening some bombs were dropped on Bocholt, Rheinhausen and Krefeld.

Mediterranean Theater.

On the 9 March the enemy attacked with 650 planes our own positions and supply roads in the Front-area of Anzio and in the area of Rome. Further attacks were carried out on transport installations near Taquinia and Orbetello.

According to photographic reconnaissance on the 2 March there were lying in Mers el Kebir one battle ship of the TEXAS-class, two destroyers, one tanker, seven steamers, two transports, 38 small landing craft and other ships, in Oran one Italian cruiser of the MONTE CUCOLI-class,

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three submarines, two transports, three tanker, 28 steamers and other ships; in Arzeu one destroyer, one escort-boat, three LST, four LCT 250, one special service ship, one steamer and other ships.

On the 10 March our own reconnaissance observed busy shipping between Otranto and Bari, two destroyers at 1350 between Otranto and Brindisi, two torpedo-boats and one coastal vessel steering northerly courses. Off Brindisi there was lying a big steamer, 160 miles northwest of Bengasi a convoy consisting of six patrol vessels and 44 steamers was sighted at 0625 steering north-westerly course. And at 1450 the air reconnaissance also spotted 90 miles south of Rhodos three destroyers heading NW.

Own air operation were not reported.

Eastern Area.

On the 9 March 1425 own and 626 enemy flights were counted on the Eastern Front. Thirty six enemy planes were reported to be shot down with nine own losses.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

The large scale enemy convoy which put out to the Atlantic on the morning of the 9 March consisted of large scale transports among them one of 25 000 BRT and seven of about 15000 BRT. The aircraft carrier were estimated to a tonnage of 20 resp. 16 000 BRT. The type could not be recognized.

On the afternoon of the 9 March another convoy consisting of eleven ships, among them six transports left the Mediterranean to the West. On the 10 March at 0330 three transports, two auxiliary aircraft carriers and six corvettes entered the Mediterranean. One cruiser of the FIDJI-class joined the enemy outgoing.

At 1015 Cape Spartel reported a convoy of 45 ships steering east and at 1500 Tariffa reported the passing of a convoy of 51 freighters and seven tankers and one auxiliary cruiser to the Mediterranean.

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Own Situation:

At 1330 two enemy submarine were sighted from the shore seven miles south of St. Tropez. Two harbor defense boats left for submarine-hunt.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring the hospital ship SEMINOLE which was reported to be sinking north of Philippeville arrived of Oran. On the 10 March at 1620 an USA-steamer gave SSS-report 40 miles NNE of Palermo and at 1640: "ship abandoned" following Radio Monitoring.

Off the beachhead, our air reconnaissance observed increased shipping. In forenoon there were observed three big eight or ten medium tonnage merchant ships and ten escort-vessels and busy discharge traffic south of Anzio. Fifteen or 20 vessels which were escorted by seven destroyers were lying stopped eight miles south of Nettuno. Three minesweepers were sighted west of Anzio, which were to be suspected in doing minesweeping.

At 0300 a disbanded group of ships of about 20 merchantmen was reported in the area up to the Gulf of Gaeta which was escorted by 12 destroyers and escort vessels. The course and speed were not announced.

Own Situation:

The minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landing craft left Spezia for a mining operation.

On the afternoon of the 9 March a new strong air raid was carried out on St. Stefano thus curtailing the firefighting activities. The mine-sweeping at our own barrages was impaired during the night of the 9 March owing to bad weather. There were no results.

3. Area of the Naval Group South

a. Adriatic:

Supplementary there was reported, that in Corcula on the 3 March one Siebelferry was shot afire by enemy fighters which could be extinguished.

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On the 5 March six enemy fighter-bombers attacked the wreck of the steamer POTESA in Cattaro with bombs. On the 7 March the Naval-arsenal Tivat was attacked in vain by enemy fighters with gunfire in Cattaro-Bay.

On the evening of the 9 March the lighthouse Liviste on Corcula was fired with 2cm guns.

On the 10 March between 0150-0215 the enemy destroyer LUMBARDA opened fire on Corcula with 20 rounds of 10.5 cm. No casualties. At 0601 an enemy submarine was sighted off Corcula.

b. Aegean

On the 9 March between 2145-2225 the submarine chaser "2144" were newly engaged with two British PT-boats and one plane in the waters of Rhodes. Both the attacking boats were damaged; one was set in flames.

After having attacked three times they shoved off to Turkish territorial waters. No own casualties occurred. Presumably these were PT-boats.

c. Black Sea

Enemy Situation

In the whole area, our own air reconnaissance did not identify new facts. Skadovsk and Horly as well as Tshurum were newly spotted. The PT-boats were not observed. According to statements made by prisoners, suspension of the ordered passage of transfer of the PT-boats to Skadovsk and return may be suspected.

Own Situation:

The submarine hunt south of Tarchankutsk was continued. Two of our own submarines were sent out against the Russian freighter "ANATOLSEROV" which was due to leave on the 10 or 11 March from Trabzan. In Kerch-straits the patrol lines had no special events.

One battery of the Naval Artillery Detachment 614 operating on land warfare dispersed an enemy column of about 300 men with well aimed fire. Another battery of this Naval Artillery Detachment destroyed three enemy guns on the 9 and 10 March.

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About 19000 cargo tons were in operation for Crimea supply to and from the 1-10 March. There were 13777 tons of supplies and 2587 men transported to and 4012 cargo tons and 2380 soldiers from Crimea.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Following an information of Hull, Ireland refused the request of the USA on removal of the Axis delegations. According to an Exchange-report, De Valera declared, that he made himself responsible for the fact, that no secrets of the 2nd Front would ooze out.

According to report of the Naval Attaché Helsinki the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed, that the Finnish note of reply to Moscow would contain a declaration of willingness for further discussion on all items. The Foreign Office in Berlin thinks, that the acute crisis had been overcome.

Conference on the situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy.

I. The Quartermaster General reports, that one has succeeded in exchanging the forth rangefinder of the battleship "TIRPITZ" and that nevertheless the anti-aircraft command post C will be completed until the date of 15 March. The repair of the diesel engines will also be speeded up. Up to the end of April one set will be ready.

II. Regarding the leading organization in the Northern Waters combination of the commands of the Admiral Northern Waters and the Commander Submarines Norway is planned. The Commander in Chief, Navy requests, that the employment of the Commander Submarines Norway must be expressed in the nomination of this Command. Therefore the Quartermaster General proposes the notation: "Admiral Northern Waters and Commander Submarines Norway." The Commander in Chief, Navy agreed with this.

In a highly restricted circle.

III. The Commander in Chief, Navy orders to advise the Chief Committee for Naval Construction (Chief manager Merker) by telegram on the delays of fixed terms in the production of the small new warships constructions.

IV. Army Situation:

The withdrawal in the South of the Eastern Front is lasting on.

In the area of Volikie Luki the battle extended to a strong large scale attack. In the whole our main line of battle could be defended.

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All the enemy attacks could be repulsed successfully south and north of Pskov. Near Narva our own front line had to be withdrawn to two km.

Special Items

I. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff went to the Fuehrer's Headquarters for discussion.

II. Concerning the Operation "Tanne".

In answering the directive of the Naval Staff concerning the organization of the Aland-Islands the Naval Command East reports, that at first the 17th Patrol-boat Flotilla with its Staff and eight drifters of the Coastal Defence Flotilla are provided for the Aland-Islands. At the time of keyword issue the flotilla will be concentrated at once and comes to operation in the first wave. Place of initial organization, Tallinn. If by detailing the 17th Patrol-boat Flotilla the diminution of forces of the Commander Minesweepers East may be bearable, will depend on the development of the situation. As the boats of the Coastal Defence Flotilla only will be ready for war from 31 March the armed fishing vessels of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla will be provided for up to this time. The Naval Command East considers it especially important to seize and to employ all the suitable boats found at the Island as quick as possible in order to release the 17th Patrolboat Flotilla. In the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences East no cut will be possible.

III. The Naval Staff transmits the directive of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff concerning the protection of the Kiel-Canal to the Naval Command East and to the Naval Command North, with copy to Group North/Fleet and contemplates an order on organizational regulations. Copy of relevant draught 1 SK I op 7650/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C, Volume III.

IV. Verifications on enemy aircraft mines salvaged in the Dutch area yielded the fact that all the mine salvaging did occur in the area of Den Helder and north-east off it. The mines near Den Helder were equipped with mine fuses, the rest was not. No enemy aircraft mines were salvaged on the Dutch west coast. The location of mines (close together in small areas) made concluding from operation of PT-boats. It may be assumed that these mines had been planted with time fuse devices. Thereoff the Naval Staff draws the conclusion, that the enemy plan of landing in the area north-east of Den Helder would not be out of question but would have only little probability, while they would be unhindered by minelaying in the Dutch west coast because here

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time fuse devices are, although not identified but still possible. The Air Force Operations Staff Navy Liaison, Armed Forces, High Command/Operations Staff Navy and the Commander in Chief of the Air Force Aerial mine Inspectorate were informed of this judgment of the Naval Staff.

V. A conclusive consideration on the blockade run with surface vessels during the time from 1941-1944 was set up by the Operations Div./Naval Staff with the date of 2 March. Copy as per 1 SKL I g 672/44 GKdos Chefsache in War Diary Part C, Volume IX. During the whole time 35 ships with about 257 770 tons of cargo left East Asia for running the blockade, 16 of these reached their aim with about 111 490 tons of cargo. As matters were developing probably it might be more suitable in composing the cargo for the East-Asia - Europe Traffic in such a manner as to put the food fats to the background for the benefit of the caoutchouc. The discernment of the necessity to prefer the importation of caoutchouc at any date only became important in the period of transshipment of 1943/44 but without obtaining any particular effect then. In continuing the blockade run with transport submarines it will be necessary to check the distribution of freight particularly carefully. In these circumstances and in accordance to the improvement of the Buna-production the importance would have to be shifted to other scarce raw materiel. Thereby, first of all the ores of the steel refinement were considered on. Also this situation must be taken in consideration in continuing the transport Submarine program as the transport-Submarines now being in construction are generally prepared for caoutchouc transportation.

VI. The development of situation in the area of the Army Group A and South will make it necessary to examine the question of Nicolaev evacuation and at the least of the thinning out of Odessa. On the part of the Navy, Nicolaev is already thinned out to a large extent. In spite of everything the evacuation in all sectors still requires transport efficiencies of vast extent. The Naval Staff is not able to order relevant directives as it is only receiving the reports on the situation and their judgment on the part of the Armed Forces High Command and of the General Staff of the Army with some delay. Therefore the Naval Liaison Officer attached to the General Staff of the Army Operation Department is requested to work out orders for the Army Group A and Army Group South, so that at any rate the early instruction of the Naval Group South and of the Admiral Black Sea must be secured in order that no precious materiel will be captured by the enemy or will have to be destroyed. The Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff, Navy will be informed with copy to this request.

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VII. The Group South is reporting, that inflation is continuing in Greece. The original announcement of demand of the Admiral Aegean for the month of March amounted to 500 milliards. In the course of the month further 300 milliards, 800 millions only by the Dockyard Control Staff were asked for. Thereby the allotment will be counted onto in total with 800 milliards at the highest and thereof only 50% in cash while further extra-charges could already be expected definitely. Disadvantageous effects on the dockyard sector remain inevitable.

The same result is showing a telegram of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping, Plenipotentiary for Greece who in details alleged the failure of new constructions and repairs on shipyards in the Aegean area which is resulting in consequence of the cut in March etat of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping of 88 milliards.

Viii. The German Naval Command Italy reports, that on the north and east coast of Corsica and on the east coast of Sardinia the enemy established an exhaustive Radar surveying service. In addition to devices set up on shore, the enemy is employing planes and PT-boats as Radar-carrier. In comparison with this the coasts of our own areas are only feeble equipped, the devices existing are liable to break down and obsolete, so that insufficient measuring distances could be reached only. Therefore, the supply by far ranging Radar sets and Radar Interception sets for surveying the coastal forwarded areas are thought to be urgently necessary. The naval forces of the German Naval Command Italy do not possess any Radar sets with exception of SG "15."* The board Radar groups cannot detect enemy PT-boats, because they have no intermediate wave sets and the operational sets are only effective for the enemy naval reconnaissance wave. In effect of this want our own operations are seriously impaired.

The matter will be treated further by the Chief of Naval Communications Division.

IX. For the intended blockade of the Russian PT-boat bases at the Taurien coast the Group South asked for immediate sending of 225 firing mechanism A 1.* The Naval Staff advises the Group that the firing devices A1 and A2 are not suited for operations against PT-boats because of their insufficient accuracy of fire. Operations with shallow timed anti submarine mines with snag line seems to be suitable. The Underwater Obstacles Branch was ordered to send 250 snag lines and special horns for the anti-submarine mines as quick as possible to Constantza.

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X. In evaluating the communications the Naval Intelligence Div./ Naval Staff Foreign Navies reports of the technical battalions of the US-Navy. Copy as per 1 SKL 9827/44 Geheim in War Diary Part C Volume XVII.

In the whole, these technical battalions have the tasks which the Organization Todt is doing here.

XI. The collection of enemy reports intercepted in the time from 28 February to 5 March by Radio decyphering and Radio Monitoring is in the observation report Nr. 10/44.

Situation 11 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Attache Tokyo was informed with Radiogram 2026 from the arrival of "KIEFER" on the morning of the 11 March.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were 16, at the 19th Group 48 and at the Azores Squadron seven planes and five crash-planes were detected on mission. Two British vessels were detected in the rendez-vous area.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept in the area of La Pallice. At 0945 the convoy

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"Kiefer" arrived at Lorient. Report on meeting and receptional passage see Radiogram 1530. The group had to repulse strong enemy air raids. The operation of the Air Commander Atlantic Coast and the skillful tactics of "Kiefer" were emphasized. One Ju 88 was shot down, another one is still missing.

For participation in the welcome of "Kiefer" the operations Div./ Auxiliary Courses Section detailed Lieut. Cdr. Neuss.

Two submarines were escorted incoming.

Channel Area:

Six mines were swept between Dunkerque and Ostende. Minesweeping was suspended owing to moon clearness.

The 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas with eleven boats transferred from Cherbourg to Brest.

With the 26 February the Group West issued a directive to the Commanding Admiral Defences West concerning the laying of barrages and informed the Naval Staff. During the new moon period in March, there are to lay the barrages N 5, 6 and 7 by the 4th and 5th Torpedoboat Flotillas, further between Dunkerque and Calais the outflanking barrages OK 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 by motor minesweepers of the 2nd Coast Patrol Force.

As soon as possible the Blitz-barrages Blitz 49, 50 and 51 are to be laid too by mine-naval landingcraft in Douarnenez-Bight.

The Naval Staff allocates the 220 LMB/S* with Firing unit AAl* which are still required for the barrages OK 10 and 11.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

The Commanding Admiral Defences North transmits the report of the leading officer of the convoy 1229 on the engagement with enemy PT-boats on the morning of 10 March. Copy see Radiogram 1640.

Both one mine was swept off Terschelling and Schiermonikoog.

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Norway/Northern Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group Command 27 planes were detected over the central North Sea.

2. Own Situation:

At 2142 on the 10 March two enemy PT-boats attacked the Petsamo - Kirkenes convoy without effect. The raid was repulsed by motormine-sweepers. Both one enemy plane was sighted in the area of Feiestedin - Lister and off Obrestad and off Oslo.

The Naval Command Norway is planning to occupy both Follafjord and Skudesnesfjord which are thought to be the focal points of the enemy submarine positions with one of our own boats each. The command of the submarine-hunt has the Commander of 11th resp. 13th Submarine-flotilla in cooperation with the Commanding Admiral of this area who will be responsible for security measures.

Thirty four northbound and 36 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances there were 27 in the remaining Baltic 26 boats and two mine exploding vessels engaged in minesweeping. One ground mine was swept east of Ruegen. In the whole area of the Baltic Sea, escort duties were carried out without special events happening.

The Commander (Minelayers) arrived at Pillau with "BRUMMER" and "ROLAND", three boats of the 6th PT-boat Flotilla carried out a reconnaissance thrust into the Narva Bay and then were detailed for reinforcement of the Narva patrol during the 11/12 March.

In the afternoon, destroyers Z "28" and Z "39" anchored on Tallinn roads. Coastal bombardment is planned for dawn of the 12 March with three destroyers.

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The nightfighter directing ship "TOGO" arrived at Hangoe.

The Naval Command East submitted the planning for "Seeigel" to the Commander (Minesweepers) East. There are planned the barrage A for blocking the Narva Bay to the West consisting of 1628 mines and 950 cutting floats. So far as icing conditions are allowing, the barrage is to be laid in one night by four destroyers, six torpedo boats six minesweepers, twelve mine-naval landing craft and the Minelayers "ROLAND" and "LINZ" and "BRUMMER." Supply of mines is taking place in Tallinn, Baltiski and Pillau. The barrage B is to be laid between Hochland and Tyters on a distance of nine miles because the shallow barrages are mostly swept by the drifting ice. There are provided 600 mines and 210 cutting floats. Fifteen naval landingcraft are provided to carry the mines.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff agreed with this plan.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The Submarine U "255" still could not set up contact with the reported convoy. Further reports of any importance from the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean were not submitted.

VI. Aerial Warfare

West Area

During the day 20 enemy planes penetrated into Belgium/Northern France without attacks. Further stronger groups attacked airfields and transport installations. Details see situation of the day. Coming from the South there penetrated several hundred four-engined enemy planes with fighter cover into Western France in the afternoon. A serious raid took place on the town and arsenal of Toulon. Naval anti-aircraft artillery shot down two bombers and one fighter. Our own fighters shot down one bomber and two fighters and sustained one loss. Further raid was carried out on Lonseyne southwest of Toulon.

On the evening and during the night of 11 March 60 enemy planes were reported to be in Western France which probably carried out flights for supplying agents. Thirty planes flew over the Atlantic coast up to the Spanish border to and fro and carried out gunfire attacks on anti-aircraft and search-light positions. Minelaying is suspected by 20 enemy planes in the area between Brest and St. Nazaire. Further 15 flights took place in Western France carried out from the South but yielded no attacks.

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Five of our own fighter bombers carried out harassing attacks in the area of South England.

Reich Territory:

From 0935 - 1015 100 enemy planes with fighter escort penetrated via Zuider Zee into the area of Muenster. Muenster was attacked with 371 high explosives and 279 liquid bombs. Eight villages and airfields were also attacked in the districts of Muenster and Steinfurt. The results of our own defence are not yet known.

Fairly strong groups presumably Mosquitoes, penetrated into the area of Essen - Bonn - Scheeifel - St. Vieth in the evening. Isolated planes penetrated via the Heligoland Bay into the area of Hamburg - Hannover. Single bombs were dropped on Harburg and Hamburg-port.

Mediterranean Theater.

Nine enemy reconnaissance planes were reported over the Aegean and three south of Peloponnesos on the 10 March. Two Spitfire were shot down by antiaircraft artillery over Southern Albania. St. Stefano, railroads and the airfield of Orvieto were attacked in the Italian area. Three hundred and twenty enemy planes fought our own ground troops in the Front area and beachhead of Anzio. Two hundred and twenty enemy planes attacked transport installations in the area of Rome and inflicted serious damage on the marshalling yards of Littorio and Tibartina. Five of the attacking planes were shot down. Moreover railway installations between Orbetello and Tarquinia and Castiglione were attacked.

Isolated enemy planes attacked own minesweepers in the area of Elba.

Six planes of the Italian airtorpedo group attacked ship targets in the area of Anzio. One steamer was damaged.

On the 11 March our own air reconnaissance spotted a convoy of 30 steamers with four escort-vessels 70 miles ENE of Alboran heading west and at 0825 a convoy of 51 merchantmen with four destroyers and three escort vessels steering east 80 miles NW of Algiers.

Eastern Area

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Sevenhundred and seventy enemy and 1354 own missions were counted on the 10 March at the Eastern Front. Six own losses and 23 enemy planes were reported to be shot down.

Photographic reconnaissance in the Black Sea carried out by the 4th Air Force on the 11 March revealed the following:

in Mariupol one auxiliary landing craft, four landing boats, three coastal vessels and 15 boats

in Berdiansk one auxiliary landing ship and 38 fishing vessels.

in Genichesk six fishing vessels

in Primorsko four big ships and ten boats.

in Yeisk three torpedo boats, one tug, 30 landing ships and 48 boats.

At the berths of the Kerch Straits there were altogether 40 landing ships.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West

Enemy Situation:

Four freighters, two tankers and two escort vessels left Gibraltar in the evening, Atlantic bound.

Own Situation:

Following the reports which were received up to now one submarine, one minesweeper, two steamers, two tugs and one smoke carrier were sunk during the heavy airraid on Toulon in the afternoon. Another submarine burned out. Three submarines and one steamer was damaged. Heavy damage was inflicted on dock and quai installations and in the area of the town. The staff headquarters of the Port Commander and the 29th Submarines Flotilla was damaged resp. destroyed. Eleven men were killed in action and approximately 50 partially were seriously injured.

At 1415 on the 10 March the French steamer PLATON (4450 BRT) was attacked with gunfire by eight or ten multi-engined enemy planes off

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Port de Bouc. Several men were wounded. Seven vessels with 1200 BRT were escorted off the southern French coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

The night reconnaissance of the harbor and roads of Naples revealed 75 freighters with altogether 416 000 BRT, one troop transport of 12000 BRT, two thought to be destroyers, ten thought to be LST and three LCJ.

During the night eleven ship targets were located off the beachhead and one burning ship was recognized. On the morning of the 11 March air reconnaissance spotted off Anzio three big and seven transports of medium-tonnage, off Nettuno, one medium-sized transport, five landing craft and northwest of Ponza two small war vessels.

No enemy forces were sighted off the Italian East coast on the afternoon of the 10 March and on the morning of the 11 March. The amount of ships lying in the ports of Viesti and Termoli could not be recognized.

Own Situation:

The minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landing craft carried out a minelaying operation on the 10 March in the area of Capraio as planned and torpedoboat TA "20" did the same during the night of 10 March south of Ancona.

Minesweeping in the own barrage off Elba was continued during the night of 10 March without effect.

On the 10 March enemy air raids were carried out on St. Stefano port and town, on one of our own convoys SSE of Leghorn, on one of our own convoys southbound of Vada and on motorminesweepers off Capraia within the patrol lines and on the 11 March at 0001 on two battle ferries sailing southward NNW of St. Stefano. In no case damage was inflicted.

During the night of the 11 March an operation of one PT-boat against the enemy shipping off the beachhead is provided.

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3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

On the 8 March the motor sailing ship USKOK was shot afire by enemy PT-boats.

At 0000 on the 11 March the motor ship RONYNELIA was attacked by two enemy artillery boats off Peljesac-peninsula. One officer was rescued, the crew and furloughers were taken prisoner.

Owing to sabotage on electrical wire lines the supply of electricity for the dockyards in Trieste was reduced to 30%. Repair work is started.

b. Aegean:

In noon and in the afternoon both an enemy submarine was sighted off Potamos (Crete) and south of Koos.

Additionally was reported on the action of the submarine chaser "2144" with enemy PT-boats on the evening of the 9th March northwest of Rhodes, that battle contact was established six miles southeast of Cape Alupo on battle distance of 1500-1800 m. On the return passage of the convoy wreckage was sighted. Heavy detonations were heard in Rhodes out at sea at 2230.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Amount of ships lying in the harbor see Aerial Warfare.

Owing to Radio Monitoring only unimportant small ship navigation on the East Coast was detected, in the northern and southern part both a submarine, on the central east coast five PT-boats and one motor gun boat.

One of our own convoys reported submarine alarm at 1100 25 miles NNE of Constantza and the submarine chaser escorting this convoy located a submarine in the same area.

Own Situation:

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At 2300 on the 10 March bombs were dropped on Kamish Burun without causing damage. At 0830 on the 11 March Ivanbaba was attacked by strong groups which dropped rocket fragmentation bombs and 15 cm shells with tail unit and about 500 light and medium high explosive bombs. One attacking plane was definitely and one may probably shot down. Four PT-boats sustained slight splinter damage. On S "49" one engine room was waterlogged. Base-quarters were slightly damaged. The losses were: two men killed in action, two wounded.

No special events were reported from the patrol line in the Kerch straits.

Submarine hunt, minesweeping and clearing work, channel sweeping and escort service were carried out as planned. Special events were not reported.

The Admiral Black Sea transmitted the following directives to his chief of transportation for discussions with the army:

1. "In operating with full scale the Admiral Black Sea can at present put at monthly disposal: large scale shipping space 40 000 freight tons, tank ships about 10 000 freight tons, lighters, train ferries. motor sailing ships about 30 000 freight tons. Therewith can be transported in average effect: about 56 000 tons supply goods, about 9000 tons of fuel. Fuel transportations may be increased in operating with tank lighters. But only at the expense of supply goods.

2. With increased effort of tugs for thinning up Nikolaev adequate more efficiency with lighters.

3. It will be matters of the Army Group to balance the total demands to these performances and to decide priority. The Admiral Black Sea orders adequate operation. The space of transportation of troop transports Odessa - Crimea is not suitable, because there may occur total losses which then may cost high casualties. According to the opinion of the Admiral Black Sea the efficiency of the naval landing craft operating for this purpose will be sufficient. At improving weather conditions increasing will be expected.

4. Naval landing craft will only be suitable for transports of wounded when they can be converted quickly and in emergency for this purpose. But this may only be carried through at the expenses of Crimea-transportation."

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VIII. Situation East Asia:

The Naval Attache Tokyo reports, that a Japanese Submarine borne aircraft spotted two aircraft carriers, two cruisers and several destroyers in Diego Suarez (North Madagascar) on the 4 March.

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Items of Political Importance:

Following to Reuter the Irish Prime Minister has been informed by a note of the British Government, that the demand of the USA for closing the German and Japanese diplomatic consular offices in Ireland was risen in full agreement with the British Government, which for itself greeted this initiative warmly.

The announcement of the USA States Department, that the War Shipping Administration would have refused the Irish request for buying two American merchantmen shows the increasing pressure imposed on Ireland.

In accordance with Reuter Mr. Roosevelt declared in his report to the Congress on precautions of the Lend and Lease Act in the year 1943 that the shipments to Great Britain in 1943 had increased for 100% in comparison with those of 1942, those to Russia for 114%, those to Africa and the Middle East for 129%, those to China, India Australia and New Zealand for 71%. The Lend and Lease support during the year 1943 would have come to 11 733.000 000 Dollars. Now the USA would have reached the point where half of their national production would be appointed for war purposes.

The Times points towards important diplomatic military shifting of appointments of personnel in Turkey. Also the Chief of the General Staff, General Orbay newly appointed not until two months ago would resign and be replaced by General Omurtag.

Regarding the transcription of Italian war ships to Russia Badoglio was informed on the part of America that hereby the transcription is not involved in legal possession but it purely deals with the question of utilization for operational purposes in various theaters.

Conference on the Situation the Commander in Chief, Navy.

I. Army Situation:

Withdrawals of the Army Group A are continued under partial essential enemy pressure. Fighting is going on for the possession of Tarnopol. Generally all is quiet in the area of the Central Army Group. The Army Group North reports effective defense in all battle sections.

II. Regarding the Aerial Situation there is reported that the enemy attacks in the occupied West Areas during the last weeks seized 95 construction sites (A 4), 35 of those were seriously and 37 slightly damaged.

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III. For the rest no particular reports and decisions.

In Particular:

I. Concerning Operation "Tanne".

a. The Naval Staff urgently demands the General Staff of the Army/Operations Div. by the Naval Liaison Officer.

1. for the exact strength of troops and equipment which are to be landed at Hochland. The data are required for the disposition of space of transportation.

2. Confirmation, that the 400 coastal gunners mentioned in the directive of the 28 February are not to detail by the Navy but by units of personnel of the Army, because the Navy has no forces available.

b. The Naval Staff informs the Naval Command East, with copy to the Group North/Fleet concerning forces for the operation "Tanne" as follows:

1. "The Commander in Chief Armed Forces Norway details:

a. Army coastal battery: 24./976 (10.5 cm 331 F) - 17./979 (10.5 cm 332 F) - 7./978 (15.5 cm 416 F) - 21./976 (15.5 cm 416 F)

b. Units of personnel (thereby notes of the type of guns) -

51/977 (10.5 cm 332 F) [translator's note: F = field howitzer]

19/976 (10.5 cm 331 F)

34/979 (10.5 cm 332 F)

9/976 (15.5 cm S.F.H. 17 P) [translator's note: SFH = heavy field howitzer]

c. Fortress Engineer Staff 26 with two Sector Groups.
Fortress Engineer Battalion 26
Rock Drilling Company 18

Forces will be held ready in that way that they may depart from Oslo eight days after issuing the keyword.

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2. The following Naval batteries are provided:

a. From the Dutch area:

The battery Scheveningen, which is still not installed. Amount of time from codeword eleven days.

b. From Norway:

Battery Droebak, Randoe and Selbenes plus one gun of the battery Hysnes. The amount of time reported so far three weeks.

Appendix:

1. The Naval Command Norway received the directive to diminish the requirement of time essentially.

2. On the strength of the High Commands Navy directive of the 9 March previously was desisted on premature removal of the naval batteries regarding to the judgment of calmer situation in Finland. In event of accentuation of the situation the Armed Forces High Command promised information in right time respectively will put up with overdued disposal of the naval batteries in event of immediate accentuation of the situation."

c. The Naval Staff continues to inform the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy as follows:

1. Want of time of the 416th Infantry Division from issuing the keyword until evacuation from Aalborg 48 hours.

2. The Commander in Chief, Air Force transmits the requirement of time for Air Force Forces from issuing the keyword until finishing loading at the station in the area of the 1st Air Force. At immediate disposal of wagons 30 hours. The time required for transportation from there to Danzig still is unknown. In order to cut down the time required for transportation the Air Force Command 1 applied the loading ports Libau or Pernau for part of the forces.

Supplement: The Naval Staff presumably will provide Libau.

d. The Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff transmitted the strength of antiaircraft forces which are to evacuate from Danzig for "Tanne". The Quartermaster Division, the Naval Command East and the Group North/Fleet will be informed by the Operations

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Div./Naval Staff. Copy of adequate draught 1 SKL I op 796/44 GKdos Chefsache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

II. Overheard wireless telegraphic traffic between the Group South and the Admiral Black Sea reveals that the thinning up of Nicolaev only is deemed necessary in the extent ordered by the Army Group A and will thus be ordered. The Naval Shore Commander Ukraine was ordered for immediate report to the Admiral Black Sea in event that the thinning up of Nicolaev would have ordered by local army authorities beyond the boundary provided up till now.

III. The Naval Attaché Tokyo reports that the existance of "Zaunkoenig"* and "Fatalist" cannot be concealed no more from the Japanese without endangering the present relations existing as the existance is known from American newspapers according to Japanese statements.

Up till now concealing was still possible with reference to the date of departure of the Monsun/boats. Moreover the Attaché Tokyo mentioned that up to now the Japanese Navy was not informed of the non-utilization of Radar sets.

In addition to that the Chief of Naval Communications remarks that Japanese representatives were repeatedly informed. As for the rest the enemy long time ago changed again to mere action location. Nevertheless it may be necessary to ascertain the information of the Japanese on experiences of homing the Radar sets.

Situation 12 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

With Radiogram 1809 the "U-JUNKER" reported:

"1. Owing to weather conditions joint passage to the southwest on the 2nd day of supply. The Submarine "LUEDDEN" totally

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supplied, the Submarine "JUNKER" except lubrication oil, the "PICH" fuel partially, no lubrication oil. At the afternoon Marqua Jota Dora 1620 the "LUEDDEN" reports two flying boats, later on own observation of carrier-borne air reconnaissance. Smoke plume in the South, dived. After attack the "BRAKE" was sunk. The whole crew on the "U-PICH". Am proceeding to the north with the "PICH".

2. "At waiting position no observations. Presumably supplies have been compromised in principle."

The breakdown of likewise this supply ship in the Indian Ocean is extraordinary regrettable. But suspicion of compromising the entire supply plan certainly is obvious though after the sinking of "SCHLIEMANN" the enemy could have counted on the replacement of this vessel whose detection would not be too difficult by means of to-day reconnaissance aids which are available for the enemy. At any rate far extended checking must be made on questions of code security and possibilities for treason. The Chief of Naval Communications and Submarine Division was charged.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were 21, at the 19th Group there were 42 planes and at the Azores Squadrons there were six planes detected in operation. At 1343 one British vessel was located in BD 3520.

At 0555 a plane of the 19th Group reported the sighting of one own submarine in BF 4253 at 290° and at 1535 two own destroyers and one transport in the latitude of St. Nazaire steering East with five knots without noting the longitude.

At 1900 our own air reconnaissance reported three destroyers in direction of 30° 710 miles WNW of Brest.

According to Counter Intelligence report continuous strong transports of soldiers and material on sally roads from London to the South on the 6th and 7th March were observed from which the London population soon concludes action. To the same conclusion comes a London agent by the informations that soldiers of the USA - Air Forces were recalled surprisingly from furlough on the 4 and 5 March for the purpose of transfer from other garrisons to the area of London. The source of this informations will be valued positively.

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2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept NNW of Brest, the harbor entrance of Bayonne was closed owing to suspected ground mines.

Five leaving Submarines and one entering Submarine was escorted.

Destroyers Z "23," ZH "1," T "27," "29" put out to sea for joint exercises and plan then to enter at Brest.

Channel Area:

From 0430 - 0453 the batteries "Grosser Kurfuerst", "Todt" and "Lindemann" bombarded located targets in AN 7986 without noticeable effect.

Owing to rough sea, convoy, escort and minesweeping was suspended.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Suspected minelaying was reported in the area of Hook. Owing to heavy sea minesweeping was suspended. The patrol positions remained unoccupied. On the 11 March 37.826 BRT were escorted in Zealand waters.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 18 planes were detected over the central North Sea. At the whole east coast of Great Britain and of Scotland NW-storms were reported.

At 0710 Radio Monitoring detected the report of a Russian reconnaissance plane on the sighting of one freighter, two patrol ships and one minelayer off Vadsoe.

Our own air reconnaissance reported two freighters (4000 BRT each) and four patrol boats steering 240° 135 miles south-west of the southerly tip of Faerbes.

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2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of the 10 March slight shooting took place in the area of Petsamo. No damage. On the same day at 1725 the wreck of the steamer "NATAL" off Makauer was attacked by enemy submarine with torpedo which detonated ashore.

At 1727 on the 12 March one of our own southbound convoys was attacked in AF 6488 presumably from wide distance by submarines. Torpedo tracks were not sighted, but detonations had been heard. Submarine hunt was commenced by minesweeper M "81."

Twenty-six northbound and 48 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

There were 31 boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances, three minesweeping planes, 32 boats in the Baltic Sea and nine minesweeping planes engaged in minesweeping.

One mine each was swept in the northern outlet of the Sund, in the Kiel-Bay in the Pommeranean Bay.

Convoys were carried through as planned and without incidents.

Stand of reinforcements for the Gulf of Finland at 1800:

AF "29," "30" in Gotenhafen,

AF "31" in Stolpmuende,

AF "32," "3," "5," "46" and "50" in Tallinn,

AF "37" in Stettin,

AF "2," "5," "9," "49" in Memel,

B "6," "35" WF "119" with the heavy gun carrier "WEST FLANDERN" following to dead reckoning off Oesel.

The motor ship "LINZ" off Swinemuende.

The minelayers "ROLAND" and "BRUMMER" Pillau.

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Summary

Eight armed fishing vessels of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla checked the course of the net without finding objections.

The Narva-Bay patrol is carried out by three minesweepers, two patrol boats, two artillery ferry barges and four armed fishing vessels and also will stay at position in strong misty weather.

Between 0800 and 0900 three boats of the 6th PT-boats Flotilla carried out a reconnaissance thrust into the Narva-Bay.

The bombardment of land targets was carried out as planned in the early hours of the morning. According to observations of the operation battalion near Hungerburg good hits were obtained in position and on supply roads of Magerburg - peninsula and in Venekuele and Saarkuele.

During the night of 12 March the laying of the Seeigel I B barrage is planned by three destroyers and two minesweepers and as well the laying of the netbarrage from the northerly tip of Nargoen at dawn of the 13 March.

V. Submarine Warfare:

In the Northern Atlantic the Submarine U "311" shot down a Fortress-plane on its second attack dropping four bombs at a distance of 30 m with a 3.7 cm gun at 0110 in BF 4585. The Submarine U "256" reports, that on the 11 March an attacking enemy plane came down before opening fire in AL 3438.

Further attacks were carried out against the Submarine U "764" in BF 4687 and the Submarine U "262" in AL 18.

After putting to sea the Submarine U "741" reported four carrier-borne planes, three destroyers and three bombs only slight damage.

The Submarine U "178" did not meet the U I T "22" but recognized large oil spot at the meeting place. The boat herself recognized continuous survey by fast land planes. According to Radio Monitoring a Submarine was attacked by plane in the same area on the 11 March and emerged slightly damaged. Four escort vessels were ordered to call up the boat for surrender. Therefore the loss of U I T "22" may be possible.

The crew of the BRAKE was completely embarked on the Submarine U "168."

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The Submarines U "183," "168," "532" and "U I T 24" received order to return to Penang. The Submarine U "188" starts passage to homebase. The crew of the BRAKE was partitioned to Submarines U "168" and "532."

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area:

Only minor flying activity without particular attacks was reported both day and night in the occupied West Areas.

During the night of 12 March 13 Me 110 were sent out for harassing attack against London.

Reich Territory:

During the day there were no enemy penetrations. Isolated enemy planes penetrated in the area Stadtlohn - Essen - Aachen.

Mediterranean Theater:

On the 11 March the enemy operated with 600 planes in the Italian battle area. The town and airfield of Padua was attacked with stronger groups. 142 fighters started for defense among them 36 Italians. Our own fighters shot down three bombers and eight enemy fighters. Eight of our own and two Italian fighters were lost.

Further groups attacked the Central Station of Firenze and the station of Prato as well as the airfield of Jesi near Ancona. During the night of 11 March enemy flights were reported in the area of Turin - Genoa - Leghorn. Bombs were dropped on Genoa.

The own operation in the western Mediterranean carried out in search of the east-bound convoy which for the last time was reported at 0825 40 miles northeast of Cape Tenes, resulted no effect.

Twelve of our own fighter-bombers with fighter cover attacked ship targets off Anzio on the 11 March and damaged one steamer of 2,000 BRT. Two Spitfires were shot down.

12 Mar. 1944

Sunday

Eastern Area:

On the 11 March 1223 own and 505 enemy missions were counted. Sixteen enemy planes were shot down by fighters, four ones by anti-aircraft artillery. Eight of our own planes were lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0730 one eastbound convoy consisting of 51 ships and four destroyers and three escort vessels were reported by our own reconnaissance in CH 5896.

Own Situation:

At 1630 the German steamer "KALISSI" was attacked by nine enemy planes with torpedoes and bombs off the Ebro-estuary within the Spanish territorial waters. The ship burnt out and was totally lost. Ten men were killed in action, about 15 were wounded.

Brief report of the Group West of the air raid on Toulon from 11 March see Radiogram 0035.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 11 March our own air reconnaissance located 47 miles southeast of Maddalena two, eight miles northeast of Cape Comino one and south of Nettunia four isolated ships. Twenty or 30 vessels, lying stopped were detected 25 miles SSE of Nettunia and about 30 ships were detected four miles west of Ishia steering north-westerly course.

The air reconnaissance carried out in the forenoon of the 12 March identified nothing important off the Italian east coast.

12 Mar. 1944

Sunday

Own Situation:

Convoy traffic, escort-duties and minelaying operations were suspended owing to bad weather conditions.

The operation of Italian MAS-boats during the night of the 11 March off the beachhead yielded no results.

One of our own convoys was engaged with three motor gun-boats whose attack was repulsed by well-aimed gun fire on the evening of the 11 March 14 miles NW of St. Stefano. One hit presumably was obtained on the enemy.

One coastal motor boat was destroyed by three destroyers in Pedaso.

At 0735 on the 11 March the minelayers "KEHRWIEDER" and KT "20" were successful in shooting down one enemy fighter-bomber in Leghorn.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic.

On her passage to Zara the transport KT "6" was engaged with three enemy PT-boats west of Sibenik. The ship out-maneuvred four torpedoes and arrived Zara with minor casualties.

Owing to new blastings the shipyards of Trieste and Monfalcone are entirely without electricity.

Ten dead were reported in further surprising attacks of partisans on Brac.

Additionally there was reported on the subject of the sinking of the coastal motor ship "RODINELLA" on the 11 March off Peljesac by British artillery carrier, that the vessel was captured north of Corcula. One of the enemy boats came alongside and took over the crew and about 20 soldiers. After shoving off from the boat, the vessel and the furloughers who remained on board were sunk by gunfire. Presumably one officer and 30 - 35 men were killed in action. Report was made by a lieutenant of the 750th Regiment who swam ashore.

b. Aegean:

One motor sailing ship was sunk east of Naxos by enemy plane with incendiary bombs. Naval antiaircraft artillery obtained the downing of one plane.

12 Mar. 1944

Sunday

Two mines were swept by minesweeping plane in the Suda-Bay.

In the afternoon the convoy "SABINE" arrived at Suda. All other convoys were delayed for 24 hours because of the weather conditions.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On the 11 March the photographic reconnaissance of Skadovsk shows three small vessels, type not recognizable. No sign has been seen indicating the presence of PT-boats.

According to Radio Monitoring busy navigation of small vessels was observed at the east coast. At the northern Caucasian coast there were observed two at the central coast 13 PT-boats, also five motor gun-boats, at the southern Caucasian coast one PT-boat and two motor gun-boats.

2. Own Situation:

Submarine hunt which carried out in the area of the southern Danube mouth by six submarine chasers and one motor minesweeper yielded no results.

During the air raid on Ivanbaba on the 11 March a fuel tank with 40 m³ of fuel burnt out. At 1510 on the 12 March the towed convoy Sevastopol - Odessa was attacked by eight enemy planes north-west of Cape Tarkan without effect. One plane was reported certainly and one presumably to be shot down.

For the rest no special events.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

13 Mar. 1944

Items of Political Importance.

The Polish proposal of a line of demarcation which would leave Vilna and Lemberg under Polish administration for the duration of the war was declared by Mr. Stalin to be wholly unacceptable. Therefore the Russians consider it useless to conduct further negotiations with the Polish Government in London. Churchill's attempts at mediation has been welcomed in Moscow as a friendly gesture.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy at 1015.

I. The Chief of Organization and Mobilization Branch describes the plan of organization for the Denmark-Skagerrak area which provides for the appointment of an Admiral, Skagerrak for the purpose of securing unity and efficiency of command in this area. However, three of the Naval Commands concerned declared against changing the present organization. The Commander in Chief, Navy will discuss the matter with the Commanding Admiral of Group North, Fleet on 16 March. A solution is difficult because of the question of personnel.

II. The Chief of Organization and Mobilization Branch spoke further about difficulties which have risen in the command area of Naval Group West as a result of the Fuehrer directive on the establishment of battle-zones and fortresses. Up to now, the Commanding Admiral of Naval Group West has not succeeded in convincing Commanding General, Armed Forces, West that the above-mentioned Fuehrer directive does not go further than Fuehrer directive 40 and that no powers may be granted the Fortress Commander which go beyond the instructions approved by the Armed Forces High Command for Commanders of Defense Areas. The Commanding Admiral of Group West has tried both orally and in writing to induce Commanding General, Armed Forces, West to modify his basic order No. 36 to meet the demands of the Navy.

In travelling in France the Commander in Chief, Navy, has already been informed of this affair and from there informed the General Jodl by phone, that the regulation of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West, now starting could not be agreed by the Commander in Chief, Navy.

The Commander in Chief, Navy, intends to discuss and examine this affair in his next visit to the Fuehrer's Headquarters.

III. The Naval Emergency units have dwindled away to 4,000 men in so far as they could be put at disposal without restriction by the navy. The Organization and Mobilization Branch has the opinion, that the maintenance of the whole organization does not reward for this small number.

13 Mar. 1944

But the Commander in Chief, Navy, decides that the organization should be maintained and this fact be transmitted to the Armed Forces High Command, that also in the West Area the Naval Emergency units of the Navy are not at disposal freely but that in principle naval forces only should be put at disposal with the approval of the Commander in Chief, Navy.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy at 1130.

I. The Quartermaster Division is planning to withdraw the naval personnel still being in operation at Crimea-beachhead. This intention is supported by the Recruitment Division.

The Commander in Chief, Navy orders, that this measure must be carried out carefully and with exhaustive argumentation regarding the situation at the Eastern Front. At first the specially skilled personnel must be required.

II. Further report of the Quartermaster General on the difficult situation of foreign exchanges in Greece.

The Commander in Chief, Navy decides that this matter is to be taken up into the description of the situation in the Aegean, which is provided for the next report to the Fuehrer.

III. The Deputy Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff reports on the Anglo-Saxon concerted actions against Ireland. (See War Diary 12 March). In meantime the entire passenger traffic between Great Britain and Ireland has been suspended.

The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff further collected all official and unofficial words of the enemy, concerning the so-called partitioning of the Italian Fleet. Copy in War Diary, Part C Volume XIII. Thereafter it seems really to be come to this, that the Russians will get British or USA vessels for their operations in the Arctic Ocean thus compensating for the advantages of the Italian Fleet which the British and American Navy on their part had already had.

The Foreign Minister of the Reich advised the German ambassador in Madrid to inform Franco, that Germany will supply Spain with cereals and even with fuel in order to compensate Anglo-Saxon pressure, but that in no case any restriction of the tungsten-import would be allowed.

13 Mar. 1944

The Foreign Affairs Section shortly reports upon the sale of the Submarine U-Blum to Spain and of the agreement on the Toulon-ships.

The Commander in Chief, Navy, discussed the affair of the arrest of the French Admirals with the Reichsfuehrer SS. The Reichsfuehrer SS promised, that this kind of arrest would not be carried out no more without the participation of the Navy.

Special Items:

I. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy reported the following information on the situation:

1. Situation in the Eastern Area:

Generally the withdrawal of the Army Group South was executed according to plan. With a small group, the Russians succeeded in crossing to the other banks near Kherson. The Russian bridgehead across the Bug-River could not yet be wiped out. Countermeasures were initiated. Today new, heavy attacks occurred near Pskov. At the Narva Front the Russians are preparing for further attacks. The Fuehrer considers the holding of Narva to be of considerable military and political importance. -

2. The Fuehrer doubts, that the Russians will rise to activity within short time after their appearance at the Lake Peipus. Today, a new directive was issued, ordering the Navy on her part to do all in order to immediate interference at Lake Peipus. Informations on the conditions of Peipus Flotilla and planned harbour accommodations are requested.

3. The Fuehrer was seriously impressed by the catastrophic shipping conditions in the Adriatic as they appeared in to-days report of Supply efficiencies at the Dalmatian-Albanian coast and in the continuous losses.

(Among others also frequent capture of motor sailing ships and small steamers by partisans causing own not unimportant casualties). Have referred to our own limits and to the possibility of certain improvements in event of operations with own PT-boats motorminesweepers and torpedoboats.

II. The Commanding General Armed Forces South-West requested the General Staff of the Army to bring 65% of German key-personnel that is to say 22 officers and 150 non commissioned officers and 500 rank and files to eleven sea target batteries in the Istrian area which are manned upto 35% with Italians and upto 10% with Racial German volunteers.

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The High Command, Army/General Staff of the Army reported to the Armed Forces High Command, that the manning of these sea-target batteries with army personnel will not be possible before long and requested of manning these eleven batteries with naval personnel. Regarding to the situation of personnel of the Navy, the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy already pointed towards the impossibility of this task, but asked for investigation if under certain conditions the Navy may partially detail forces in transferring these equipment as to Naval batteries.

Further dealing with matters by the Quartermaster Division.

The Trainings Unit Fleet submitted plans concerning land-target bombardment by the heavy cruiser PRINZ EUGEN against targets on the Frische Nehrung for the "PRINZ EUGEN" and destroyers. Copy of adequate Radiogram as per 1 SKL 7891/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

III. During the nights of 14 and 15 February both one barrage of 24 respectively 21 LMB* with AA₁* (fuse devices) on the British south-east coast were laid. While no minesweeping at the first barrage could be ascertained, presumably because the mines do not impede navigation, a number of reports have been intercepted by Radio Monitoring between 15 - 22 February which makes known that the enemy succeeded in sweeping the AA₁* fuse devices was without initial difficulties; the Naval Staff asks for assessment by the Underwater Obstacles Branch. Copy of adequate draught 1 SKL I E 7654/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume VI.

Situation 13 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were six, at the 19th Group 54 and at the Azores Squadrons nine planes detected on missions.

Seven locations of British vessels were reported in the rendez-vous area.

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Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Both two groundmines were swept in the area of Lorient and northeast of Guernsey. The blocking of Bayonne port entrance was released. Five Submarines were escorted incoming.

The destroyers Z "23," ZH "1," T "27," T "29" entered Brest at 0900 after having accomplished their exercises.

Brest roads was blocked owing to mine-laying.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea.

Owing to stormy weather convoy and escort duties were curtailed. Patrol positions remained unoccupied.

A convoy of 10845 BRT was carried through in Zealand Waters.

One Danish fisherman reported, that he sighted in twilight of 12 March three British PT-boats steering northerly course, 78 miles off Blavanshuk.

Norway/Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Ten planes were detected at the 18th Group.

At 0848 120 miles southwest of Syderoe our own air reconnaissance sighted one tanker of 10,000 BRT steering 60° and at 1250 two steamers of both 10,000 BRT and two steamers of both 7,000 tons steering North 70 miles SW of Bergen. Evidently these are Swedish ships.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 11 March gunfire was reported from the area of Petsamo. No damage was caused.

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On the 13 March one of our own westbound convoys was attacked by several enemy bombers and fighters in the outlet of the Varanger-Fiord. Minor casualties arose by gunfire. The intervention of our own air cover succeeded in shooting down seven planes by fighters.

On the afternoon of the 12 and on the forenoon of 13 March one of our own convoys was attacked by submarines in Ollsfiord. At 1530 one of our own planes sighted a submerging submarine in Drontheimsleden steering NE.

Twenty seven northbound and 38 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 25 boats and three minesweeping planes, in the Baltic 16 boats and one mine exploding vessel were engaged in minesweeping. One mine each was swept in the northern outlet of the Great Belt, off Laesoe and in the Kiel Bay.

At 0414 the drifter FORTUNA was rammed and sunk by the salvage steamer BOREAS south of Gjedser.

At 2345 the steamer KNIPRODE (10 123 BRT) ran aground in drifting snow at the Samsoe-Belt. Tugs to help were sent out. For the rest all convoys were carried out as planned and without incidents.

The laying of the net barrage from the northern tip of Nargoen by the net-layer has been started with three tenders and two working-boats under cover of four armed fishing vessels.

At 1430 the Commander of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla with Z "25," "28," "39" and M "3" and M "37" left Paldiski in order to carry out the minelaying operation "Seeigel 1 b".

No special events were reported from the Narva Bay.

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The Commander of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla submitted the action summary of the bombardment of enemy bases north-east of Hungerburg on 12 March. Copy 7828/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

V. Submarine Warfare:

In the Atlantic the group "Preussen" with 16 boats was newly organized in attack-areas between the latitude in AK 24 and BD 39.

At 0855 the submarine U "575" reported air raid in BD 6824.

The submarine U "168" is proceeding to Batavia with the whole crew of "BRAKE". In moon shine during the night of 12 March the boat was attacked by carrier-borne aircraft with rocket-bombs.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

In forenoon, several hundred enemy bombers with heavy fighter cover flew over the area of Amiens-Compiègne. The airfield of Poix was attacked.

About 225 enemy missions without attacks were reported in the area of Belgium/Northern France and Western France. About 15 enemy missions were carried out from the south into the area of Montpellier.

In the evening hours and during the night of 13 heavy attacks were carried out by strong enemy groups in France. The marshalling yard of Laon, the airfield St. Didier, the marshalling yard and airfield of Le Mons were the main points of attack. Suspected minelaying was carried out in the area of La Rochelle up to the Ile d'Oleron.

Twenty six of our own planes carried out harassing attacks in the southern British area on Brighton and Eastbourne. One FW 190 did not return.

Reich Territory:

In the evening 15 enemy planes penetrated into the area of Essen-Aachen and 20 planes into the area of Frankfurt/Main up to Mainz.

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Mediterranean Theater:

Special missions were not reported.

Eastern Area:

On the 12 March 635 enemy and 751 own missions were counted at the Eastern Front.

With three own losses 16 enemy planes were shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

In the morning two transports, 17 freighters, two tankers, one auxiliary war ship with ten corvettes steering western course presumably convoy MKS 42 were sighted in Gibraltar Straits.

Own Situation:

Evidently the serious damage which were caused in the enemy raid on Toulon on 11 March were favoured by retarded screening with smoke cover. It will be checked why the antiaircraft-commander of the Air Force did not give order for screening until nine minutes after the Flak-alarm has been sounded.

After the attack on the steamer KILISSI the ore ship SAUMUR called at San Carlos de la Rapida as emergency port and proceeded during the night of 12 March to Tarragona.

Forthwith the Group West suspended the fruit-steamer-traffic pending further notice. The Command only considers resumption to be possible by employing ships which can at least make ten knots and which can proceed in the night between Port Vendres and Barcelona without intermediate port, though the nights grow shorter and shorter.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

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According to Radio Monitoring one westbound convoy was sailing in the area northwest of Palermo during the night of 12 March.

In the afternoon air reconnaissance identified 21 transports and steamers lying stopped in the area of Nettunia, nine landing ships tanks, 51 landingcraft and a number of escort vessels. And with course to the beachhead three steamers and shoving off the beachhead two steamers, two transports, one landing craft tanks as well one cruiser and escort vessels.

At 0515 two destroyers and 16 what was thought to be landingcraft stood for twelve miles north east of Ortona. At 0515 two transports, nine freighters with three escort vessels were reported north Tobruk steering south-easterly course and at 0703 six steamers and five escort vessels were reported steering West.

During the night of 11 March strong air survey of the own ports at the Italian West-coast with multiple air raids on own convoys off Vada was observed. Thereby one naval landingcraft was damaged.

Own Situation:

In the enemy air raids on the 12 March both one attacking aircraft was shot down in Genoa and Spezia.

On the noon of 13 March Spezia and Viereggio were attacked.

The power station and two bridges were hit in Spezia and in Viareggio roads to the South were hit.

The minelayer KEHRWIEDER and one naval landingcraft left Spezia for carrying out a minelaying operation north of Elba.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

The Naval Port Commander of Rovigno reports daily abduction of able-bodied men from Rovigno and the vicinity by partisans and blocking the evacuation of provisions by plots against railroad traffic. The train Trieste-Pola running for the first time again struck a mine.

b. Aegean:

One enemy submarine was sighted east of Cape Spatha at 1006 on 12 March and one off Suda-Bay at 1410.

On 13 March minor flights only were carried out over the Aegean.

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According to report of the assault division of Rhodes, an enemy commando raid carried out by about 30 men against the position of our own cover Platoon at Tilos was repulsed.

At Nemos and Seskli a great many of food supply was secured, which are thought to be unloaded by British Forces on 10 March.

Another mine was swept by minesweeping aircraft in Suda on 12 March.

The execution of convoy duties was delayed to another 24 hours, owing to bad weather conditions.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

At 0630 three batteries of the Naval Artillery Detachment 613 opened fire on enemy boats lying alongside a stranded naval landing craft at the northwesterly tip of Kossa Tusla. One boat was sunk. The naval landingcraft scored six direct hits.

In the morning Feodosiva was attacked by altogether 80 enemy planes which attacked in two waves. At the motorminesweepers R "164" and S "49" minor splinter damage was inflicted. Altogether 17 planes were shot down whereof eleven were shot down by fighters and six in joint effort of Naval antiaircraft artillery and Air Force.

During the night of 12 March Nicolaevsk was attacked by enemy planes. The convoys Nicolaevsk-Odessa bound in passing Kinburun-tip were seized by enemy search light. The searchlights were shelled by own batteries.

At 1919 on 12 March the Army Coastal Artillery reported a fast going vessel steering westerly course between Kinburun-tip and Beresan-Channel.

On the afternoon of the 13 March AK Metchet and Simferopol were attacked by an enemy plane.

Transportation and convoy traffic was carried out as planned.

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The transfer of four naval landing craft and three harbor defense boats from Odessa to Bug-estuary was planned for surveying operations in the Dnepr-estuary.

The group South advised the Admiral Black Sea to maintain the repair shop in Odessa in so far that the execution of ship repairs occurring during the transportation to and from Odessa would be possible.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

At Badoglio's request from Great Britain, USA and Russia of reestablishing diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Italy has been promptly confirmed on the part of Stalin.

According to a report of the German ambassador in Ankara from 28 February about intimations of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs on the present situation the development on the Eastern Front will remain decisive; in event that the Dneestr-River would be crossed the war would be lost according to his opinion, as in this very moment the Balkans would disorganize. Then, for her own sake Turkey would be compelled to share in the war too. Copy of adequate report-note of the Chief of Department Foreign Countries from 9 March as per 1 SKL 9939 Geheim in War Diary Part B Volume V.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy.

I. The Commander in Chief orders oral report on the situation in shipyards in regard to the delay of fixed times in the naval artillery lighter construction and on possibilities for their speeding up.

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

According to Reuter, Moscow refused the Finnish answer immediately.

The Military Attaché at Tokyo reported the opinion of the Japanese General Staff on Russia as follows:

1. Firm position of the Stalin Government. Uniform, very efficient, successful conduct of war and policy thus the population and army is getting more confident and rising confidence in leadership. Also in 1944 the Soviet Union will be able as to personnel and material matters to execute operations in the same extent as in 1943.

2. Capacity of industry after making accessible the areas of raw materials in the Ural, Zusbas and Middle East: Petrol 103%, coal 65%, iron 55%, machinery 60%, ammunition 90%, chemical industry 85%, light industry 30%, electricity 80% of the prewar level. Particularly noticeable: the bottleneck of coal and iron output, the lack of cars, machine-tools and farming machine implements as well in railway traffic, monthly production 2900 planes, 1850 tanks, food situation in general secured. Up to now deliveries by Anglo-Saxons 3.8 million tons.

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3. In the military service about 10 million men, among them 700 000 women. Up to the end of March another 2 million men liable to serve as soldier in the age from 16 to 50 years will be available.

4. In comparison to November of the passed year the strength and organization of the far eastern forces remained unchanged. Higher command improved, owing to relief by front experienced commanders. The mass of officers and rank and files grew worse. Since the European war frontier fortifications strengthened more and more. Training especially in counterattacks against Japanese rupture of the border, coastal defense, air raid precautions, co-operation with tanks, infantry, main concentration on artillery.

5. The Soviet Union will avoid war with Japan so long as Japan is possessing enough strength for defense.

III. The Chief of Submarine Division points out that the wireless traffic of Submarines in the Indian Ocean might be the reason for the loss of "BRAKE". In the case of "BRAKE" in contrary to that of "SCHLIEMANN" the tendency towards the direction of the meeting point would be revealed from Submarine wireless traffic, though the intervening time between the single messages was extraordinary long.

The Commander in Chief, Navy considers this supposition being at hand and quite possible, but notwithstanding has the opinion, that in this case too treason and wireless decyphering earnestly must be taken into consideration. Nearly nothing can be done against the submarine Radio communications because it is tactically inevitable. Therefore change of code will at first be carried out. New heading orders will be issued in the next days. But until they become effective some more weeks will pass. Moreover special codes will be introduced for each single submarine.

In a highly restricted circle:

IV. The Naval Command East dispatches the following information concerning the battery personnel for "Hochland" (Tanne) from the Army Group North:

"The Army Group North can only detail the battery personnel required for "Tanne" from land-front-positions the weakening of which may not be justified in event of the further lasting situation on the front. Wanting occasion of shooting practice on sea targets diminish the value of the battery in the decisive moment. Propose establishment of one Naval Artillery Detachment in the strength required by the Admiral Baltic Countries. The Army Group North details the battery crew until the arrival of naval crew. Sent the term of disposal. Appendix of the Naval Command East: In this area no battery crew available."

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The Naval Liaison Officer attached to the General Staff of the Army confirmed the contents of this report.

As the Isle of Hochland appears to be of high ranking importance as corner-pillar of the Seeigel-barrage in the inner Gulf of Finland the occupation with own troops lies in the Navy's own interest.

Therefore the Commander in Chief, Navy attaches great value on the fact that corresponding to the request of the Naval Command East one Naval Artillery Detachment will be put at disposal. Because of the impossibility of establishing an additional Naval Artillery Detachment, it is considered to be suitable to designate a Naval Artillery Detachment from another area (West Area) and to detail it in the right moment of keyword-issue in order to relieve the army personnel.

Relevant directive 1 SKL I op 828/44 GKdos Chfs. will be sent to the Quartermaster Division. Copy in War Diary Part C Volume III.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the Operation "TANNE":

1. The Naval Command East with copy to Group North/Fleet, the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff, the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy, the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Home Staff Overseas Branch, General Staff of the Army Operational Department, receive the following directive:

On application of the Air Force Command 1 provide Libau as port of shipment for the following forces thus reducing time of transportation.

70 officers

690 noncommissioned officers

2200 men

55 motor cycles

135 cars

600 trucks a.s.o. among them

24 tractors, 185 tons of equipment.

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2. The Naval Command East reports:

The Chief of Naval Communications Division is planning to establish two gigantic Wuerzburg devices,* two Hohentwiel devices* (sea tactical) mobile and one Flum device* (mobile) at the Isles of Aland. Reconnaissance of the position and establishment was proposed to be done already now proving, that the Radar-organization at the Finnish side has to be accomplished furthermore in order to protect the navigation in the Bothnian Sea and in the Western outlet of the Gulf of Finland. Thereby the possibilities of unobtrusive reconnaissance may be given.

The plans of the Chief of Naval Communications Division do not surpass the organization "Tanne". Finnish demands which are to be fulfilled independently thereon are not submitted. Therefore reconnaissance of the position cannot yet be started. In political seas the Isles of Aland are hot iron!

II. The Naval Command East proposes, that instead of the right of returning to former claims on the boats of the Inspectorates, Schools, Submarines of the Commanding Admiral etc. to control channels, shooting exercises and training areas Inspectorates themselves etc. will in future take up themselves sweeping tasks in their own training areas, whereby local Defence Flotillas will grant support as far as possible especially in detailing temporary special service personnel.

The Naval Staff considers the commissioning of boats of Inspectorates, Schools etc. with tasks of the Commanding Admiral Defences East not suitable and refuses its consent to the above-mentioned proposal referring to the decision of the original request.

III. (See War Diary 1 March IV). The Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff dispatches the assessment on the situation of the Air Force Command South-East which in reference to statements of noticeable weakening of enemy efforts in the Aegean Area considers ship movements in the southern Aegean for supplying the isles to be extraordinarily favorable in the moment and therefore proposes increased sea transportation also in regard to the beginning of new moon phases.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff informs the Group South, the Admiral Aegean with copy to the Shipping and Transport Branch in correspondence to that.

IV. The Admiral Black Sea with copy to the Group South receive the directive for report in correspondence to the request of the Group South if and which reasons are preventing the new employment of the landing company staying at present in the Aegean Area in mopping up the islands of the Adriatic.

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V. On request, the Group South received information of the army situation from 9 March by the Operations Div./Naval Staff on 10 March.

Draught 1 SKL I b 763/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV a.

With 14 March the General Staff of the Army ordered to the Army Group A:

"The Army Group A is responsible for continuous and early information on the situation to the Naval Group South and to the Admiral Black Sea."

VI. At 0142 the following directive from the Group South to the Admiral Black Sea was intercepted:

"According to information of the Naval Staff the Army plans to defend Nicolaev for limited time only in bridgehead manner. Execute evacuation in cooperation with local Headquarters of the Army. Carry on grain transportation as long as possible."

VII. Within the framework of plans which the Admiral Black Sea has reported in event of Turkey's changing her attitude, the Group South dispatched the following minefield plan:

"In event that changes in Turkey's attitude would be noticeable early enough the following plans are existing:

1. Laying of two partial barrages off the Northern outlet of the Bosphorus (Minelayer "MURGESCU" and motor minesweepers).
2. Disposing of one mine ferry barge each in Odessa, Sulina, Constanta, Varna and Burgas for surprising blocking of ports.
3. Laying of harbor protecting barrages successively Burgas, Varna, Sulina, Odessa.

In case of immediate participation on war by Turkey there are existing the following plans:

1. Immediate minelaying in the northern outlet of the Bosphorus with TMB* by PT-boats.
2. Laying of two EMF-barrages west and east of the Bosphorus outlet.
3. Minelaying in the inner Bosphorus with aircraft mines.

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The following mines are required:

60 TMB*
80 EMF*
1125 anti sweeping devices
150 RMB*
1310 EMC respectively UMB*

The Naval Staff decides as follows:

Owing to the present conditions of production in the field of mines and the developing of focal points in other areas, the immediate delivery of mines and anti sweeping devices is impossible. There will be allotted with registration number S 103:

60 TMB/S with firing MA?*
80 EMF*
600 explosive floats
350 buoys with antisweep cutter
175 EMR*
150 RMB/H (instead of BM 1000 which are not suited for harbor-infection)
600 EMC*
710 UMB*

Details on installation, places of destination and transport settle with Mining and Barrage Inspectorate directly.

The EMC* and UMB* mines cannot be delivered until the end of May and then only allotted in three monthly installments.

VIII. Concerning the employment of mine exploding vessels the Operations Div./Naval Staff transmits the following directives to the Group West, the Naval Commands North and East, with copy to Commanding Admiral Defences East, Commanding Admiral Defences North and Commanding Admiral Defences West:

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1. The losses of mine exploding vessels by ELM/J Spr.* (mines) still remained in bearable boundaries, though the enemy could act more severely without strong effort against this important sweeping device.

Each ELM J Spr. falling in the channel is inflicting earlier or later to a hit on a mine exploding vessel because otherwise they are not to sweep.

2. Restriction of mine exploding vessel operations only is evident when the readiness of action would be endangered by losses in that cases which would require such an effort (for instance bad weather, important convoys).
Operation on depths beneath 20 m are to be reduced in feasible manner.

3. In repairing mine exploding vessels or in routine dockyards repairs the installation of the supplementary coil practically is to be executed. For new constructions the installation already is provided at new constructions.

IX. Owing to inquiry there was transmitted to the Admiral of the Fuehrers Headquarter:

1. Stock of mines with new firings:

a. DM₁* - firing had to be prohibited because of stated leakage of the rubber-pouch of the pressure box. Today only 180, from the 25 March again 500 mines for PT-boat operations will be ready. Installation of the pressure box for the Air Force not until 25 March.

b. Firing AA₂* by breakdown of Pertrix-plant Berlin no firing batteries available, no stock because not suitable to store for longer time. Not until short before the operation batteries used to be installed. New construction will commence with 120 pieces a week from the 1 April. The Air Force has no batteries too.

2. The production of coastal mines type A has been started on 10 March with daily 150 pieces daily in Denmark and 300 pieces in France.

Situation 14 March 1944:

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

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II. Situation West Area:

Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were 13, at the 19th Group 39 at the Azores Squadron Seven planes detected on missions. One wireless telegraphic guard and seven British vessels were located in the rendezvous area.

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

At 0110 minelaying by plane was observed in the Brest approach. One mine was swept in the area of Lorient and two ones were swept in the area of Brest. At 0141 the minesweeper M "4216" was slightly damaged by aircraft gunfire of a Mosquito-plane off the Loire.

The attacking plane was shot down.

Channel Area:

Patrol and escort duties were suspended owing to weather situation. At 2200 on 14 March enemy PT-boats attacked two groups of the 36th Mine Sweeping Flotilla off Gravelines and sunk the Senior-Officers-boat M "3630." One PT-boat was shot afire.

In a new attack at 2353 one of the PT-boats was sunk by our surprising fire of defense, another was suspected to be sunk.

The returning PT-boats happened to meet the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla north-west of Gris Nez shortly after midnight and thereby sustained essential losses. Details were not yet reported.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Nothing to report.

Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

14 Mar. 1944

At the 18th Group 22 planes were detected in the northern North Sea and west of the Orkneys.

According to Radio Monitoring in the afternoon and evening destroyers with at least two PT-boats were at sea in the Radio area of Lazarhuk.

Own Situation:

On 12 and 13 March there were busy enemy flights in the area of the Polar Coast.

Thirty seven northbound and 48 southbound ships were escorted.

With 15 March the Admiral Northern Waters reports the fusion of the former staffs of Admiral Northern Waters and Commander Submarines Norway with the new notation of Headquarters "The Admiral Northern Waters and Commander Submarines Norway". The Commander is Captain (Navy) Peters.

The supply flight for "Bassgeige" was started at 1404.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 26 boats, in the Baltic 36 boats and eight minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping.

Escort service was carried out as planned. North-east of Skagen one He 111 was shot down by ship-antiaircraft artillery of one of our own steamers because ostensibly she was approached directly. The crew was rescued by a minesweeper.

The destroyers Z "25," Z "28" are lying in Paldiski, Z "29" on Tallinn Roads.

Auxiliary landingcraft B "6," B "35" FW "119" arrived at Tallinn. Both the vessels mentioned first are not ready for war. Transfer to shipyards is required.

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The 1st motor minesweeper Flotilla with the NETTELBECK and six boats is in passage from Swinemuende to Pillau.

The nightfighter directing ship TOGO was transferred from Hangoe to Tallinn in escort of a minesweeper and a patrol-boat.

The barrage "Seeigel 1b" was laid as planned.

For this time work on the net barrage could not [be] carried out owing to weather conditions.

Up to now 3.2 miles of the first net were laid.

The Naval Command East submitted the plan for "Seeigel 2 b" which ought to run from 59437 North 27195 East to 49435 North 27307 East. The Naval Staff agreed with the barrage 2 b and points towards the Naval Command East that the earlier planned reinforcement of Seeigel barrages is offering the possibility of breaking through in the Finnish Skerries. The Naval Command East was requested for judgment of the situation and proposals also referring the Finnish attitude.

V. Submarine Warfare:

No particular reports were submitted from Submarines in the Atlantic and in the Indian Ocean.

The Submarine Division/Naval Staff submitted the operational order for infection of convoy respectively steamer-routes off Capetown and Colombo. These tasks must be carried out by the Submarine U "219" as additional task. The main task is transportation to Penang which has to be carried out absolutely, thereby minelaying operations have to be broken off or to be carried out farther off resp. in event of strong defense or too great difficulties in the operational areas resp.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

Sixty approaches in the occupied Western Zones were reported in the course of the day there off some approaches from sea and coast and about 45 enemy penetrations into the area of Dunkerque, Ypres without attacks.

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A number of enemy penetrations was carried out into the coastal area of Bayeux into the area of Fécamp also without attacks.

On the evening or during the night of the 14 March resp. airfields in Belgium and Northern France were attacked. Despite this, 20 enemy approaches from the South in Western France into the area of Toulon up to south of Perpignan has been executed without attacks.

From 2250 - 2330 our own planes attacked London with 187 planes; 141 of them reached the target 15 planes were lost.

Reich Territory:

No penetrations.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 13 March about 600 enemy planes were in operation in the Italian Front area and in the area south of Rome. Both one plane was shot down by own fighters and antiaircraft artillery. Further attacks directed towards La Spezia, Spoleto, Morgnano, Pedaso, Talamone, San Stefano were reported. Several railroad bridges and transportation installations were damaged. Six barges were damaged respectively sunk at Talamone. In the attack on San Stefano the attacking planes were repulsed by antiaircraft artillery. During the night of 14, three of our transport planes were shot down by enemy interceptor fighters in the area of Rhodes. Fourteen enemy planes were on supply mission for partisans in the Balkans area.

On 14 March our own reconnaissance reported eight steamers off Port Said heading west.

Eastern Area:

At the Eastern Front 961 own and 330 enemy missions were reported on 13 March. With eight own losses 48 enemy planes could be shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group Command West:

Enemy Situation:

On the morning one GARIBALDI-class cruiser left Gibraltar Mediterranean bound.

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On 12 March at 1900 the amount of ships lying in Gibraltar was approximately 80 merchantmen and tankers, three cruisers, one auxiliary cruiser, 36 destroyers and escort vessels and a greater number of small auxiliary vessels.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance there nine steamers and one destroyer, two suspected to be motor minesweepers, eight patrol-vessels were lying in Anzio and off the beachhead in the morning.

No reports came in from the convoy UGS 34 which ought to be in the area of Bizerta at 0800 on 14 March according to dead reckoning. According to Radio Monitoring the group RUBBLE received air raid warning at 0836.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 13 March the harbor of Talamone was seriously damaged and will not be suitable for the next time, two naval landing craft were totally lost.

On 13 March at 1735 the minelaying group KEHRWIEDER was attacked by planes with bombs and gunfire south-east of Spezia. The minelayer "KEHRWIEDER" was damaged and sustained casualties. The operation was broken off. The group entered Spezia. The aerial survey of ports of the Italian West-coast by enemy planes remained very strong.

During the night of 13 minesweeping was continued on one of our own barrages north of Ebba.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

On 13 March at 1700 air reconnaissance reports two torpedo boats heading north between Pescara and Vieste.

Own Situation:

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In consequence of an enemy air raid on the afternoon of 13 March two J-boats sunk in Corcula.

On 14 March the torpedoboat TA "36" transferred from Pola to Trieste, the PT-boat S "33" from Pola to Venice.

On 13 and 14 March the motor minesweeper R "128" carried out trial runs from Venice to Pola and return.

A naval officer of the High Command, Navy embarked at the TA "36" for the operation "FRECHDACHS" reported that

1. the secret required for this operation was not kept and that the Commander of the 11th Coast Patrol Force (Lieutenant Comdr. v. Kleist) was informed of that fact;

2. the target of the operation was known even to rank and files;

3. the group put out to sea still before nightfall directly in southern direction. (without false courses).

The Naval Staff informs the Admiral Adriatic, with copy to Group South from this report and expects that before repeating this operation "FRECHDACHS" this experience will be taken into consideration and further orders will be arranged for.

b. Aegean:

The thorough search of Tilos island was concluded without effect. At Andros one signal squad was attacked by partisans and sustained casualties.

In the framework of a discussion of the Crete supply with the Army Group E the Group South stated, that in total 3625 tons of supply arrived at Crete from 1 - 12 March.

The Group urgently demands safeguarding of the need of foreign exchange in order to execute repairs on merchantmen as quick as possible and reports that the operation with motor sailing ships is going on in full scale and that the supply with armaments of these units is continuing. Among others the Group demands relief in security regulations for Piraeus harbor because working at night and transloading of ammunition and supply in the harbor is inevitable in urgent cases. The precautions ordered on the part of the navy concerning reinforcement of the supply shipping in the Aegean would have become effective already in the beginning of February if not extraordinarily bad weather conditions would have prevented the navigation.

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Therefore the Group does not recognize any critical situation in the supply of Crete concerning the question of sea transportation so far as enemy action would not increase essentially.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to photographic reconnaissance of the 4th Air Force the amount of ships lying in the harbors of Taman-coast do not show any extraordinary facts.

According to Radio Monitoring only few light naval forces were detected at the eastern coast.

The Submarine situation did not change.

Own Situation:

The operation of the Submarine U "20," U "24" against enemy freighters being in passage from Trabzon to Batum revealed no effect. In bad visibility the boats were not able to make contact. They were directed to new operational areas off Tuapse and Poti.

Dnepr-Liman is patrolled. During the night 13 four naval landing craft and two harbor defense boats were in operation. A patrol of the same strength is planned for the night of 14 March.

Submarine hunt off San Gheorge was broken off without effect.

In an enemy air raid on a convoy of naval landing craft sailing from Odessa to AK Metchet one naval landing craft was slightly damaged. One enemy plane was shot down.

During the afternoon Perwomaisk was bombarded with stronger harassing fire from Kinburun which inflicted no damage.

The Crimea-convoys were executed as planned.

The Danube is blocked from Tulcea to Sulina owing to suspected mine-laying.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

On 14 March the Finnish Reichstag held a closed session in which the Prime Minister gave the report on the situation.

On instructions of the Fuehrer the Commander in Chief, Navy, went to Breslau in order to deliver there the traditional address before the aspirant officers of this year.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff:

No particular reports and decisions.

Special Items:

I. Among others the report on the situation of the Operations Staff/ Navy runs as follows:

3. "Italy: The enemy's attitude in the beachhead is judged from large scale attack preparations. Very busy supply from sea, reinforcement with new forces, relief of warworn troops, advancing of artillery, fighting against our own antiaircraft artillery, busy radio traffic, new establishment of radio net, increased fighting against our own supply etc. are pointing in this direction. Today, preparing attacks on the 65th Infantry Division were repulsed except one penetration. Also there must be counted on new outflanking landing operations possibly together with part operations on other fronts as first phase of the invasion attack.

4. West Area: The heavy air attacks which occurred twice on Le Mans (in order to destroy the main junction of railroads leading to Brittany) as well as the minelaying of the approach to Brest (for purpose of occasional blocking own naval forces which would be there) in connection with the radio silence in Great Britain since 13 March at 0000 indicate perhaps to operations soon at hand against Brittany. Increasing air raids on transport installations in the area north of Paris likewise deserve particular attention. In total the Armed Forces Operations Staff does not yet count on large scale invasion but on the possibility of part attacks soon occurring in order to form bridgeheads. My personal opinion, that the time from 19 - 23 March may be favorable for landing operations according to moon, tides and probable weather conditions was reported to the Fuehrer. But to-day, the Foreign Armies West Branch transmitted a judgment of weather

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conditions of the Naval Staff for the time from 11 - 21 March where-
after favorable conditions for aerial warfare but no period of landing
for several days is to be expected. I request continuous transmission
of weather forecasts for several days by the Naval Staff of the area
southern North Sea - Channel - Atlantic Coast."

II. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Foreign Affairs
Section considers the situation in the Mediterranean Theater, stand
of 9 March 1944, characterized with:

struggles in Italy

the continuing assembly of an invasion army
in French North Africa

the temporary easing of the situation in the Aegean
Area and the continuing withdrawal of enemy troops
from Syria-Palestine.

The suspected evacuation of Anglo-American troops from the Mediter-
ranean to Great Britain was confirmed. Generally it seems to be an
exchange of not battle experienced troops of the Great-Britain area
from which approximately one division was transferred to the Mediter-
ranean up to now.

The important American supply in personnel is thought to be for reim-
bursement of losses only which occurred up to now.

The unchanged Anglo-American concentration of air forces in the west-
ern part of Southern Italy as well as the lack of greater tonnage in
the pretended ports of departure at the Italian east coast make at pre-
sent operations in the Adriatic-area the most unlikely but could stress
the possibility of an outflanking landing operation at the Italian
Western Coast.

The invasion army in French North Africa is estimated to at least 22
groups ready for action. According to reconnaissance identifications
of the North African ports - which, however, are very incomplete -
the detected number of landing craft permits the conclusion, that a
landing operation is not immediately at hand.

Concerning the naval forces, the Armed Forces Operations Staff/Foreign
Affairs Section considers the retention of heavy vessels and the ap-
pearance of two new auxiliary aircraft carriers in the western Medi-
terranean and the great number of cruisers, destroyers and submarines
in this area very important.

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In regard to enemy plans the following is said:

Western Mediterranean:

The striking retention of heavy naval forces at Nettuno as well as the increasing number of auxiliary aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean enable the enemy headquarters to launch a sufficient number of naval forces in supporting large scale landing operations on fortified coasts.

Beyond deduction of the tonnage of landing craft used in Nettuno there will still be left landing-craft tonnage for about three or four landing divisions. As the landing-craft tonnage operating at Nettuno will also be engaged in future in supporting these operations, the enemy would not at present be able but execute only one large scale landing operation in the western Mediterranean without new supplies of landing-craft tonnage.

The judgment of possibilities for employment of fighter forces does not reveal further indications on the launching of a large scale operation, as from Corsica-base the close-range-zone of fighters covers the northern Italian area as well as the southern French coast up to the Gulf of Lyon inclusively.

An operation against northern Italy would strike the deep flank of the Army Group C and therewith would be connected with the operations in Italy. Limited by geographical conditions it will not effect essentially upon the main invasion from Great Britain against France. Also, the conditions of command organization of the invasion armies which are under the command of General Eisenhower inclusive the troops standing in French North-Africa far off from the High Command of General Wilson is in contrary to such an operation. The number of counter-intelligence reports which indicate to enemy plannings in the direction to the Gulf of Genoa/North Italy's comparatively small. Up to now, sabotage plots and aircraft attacks in the North Italian area were only directed against supply organizations of the Army Group C.

A large scale landing operation between Marseille and San Rafael or in the Gulf of Lyon would bring the intended immediate effect on the operation against the French northern and western coast. The possibility for launching stronger forces without difficulties being effected by the tides and within the shortest time would be an important point of view for possible advanced priority in contrary to the invasion started from Great Britain.

The suspected subordination of the Allied Forces in North Africa already mentioned under the High Command of Eisenhower as well as

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similar organization at the Allied heavy bomber formations of the Air Force refers to this direction of operation.

The composition of the invasion group North Africa in which the French are participated with 8 2/3 large groups would not indicate to a landing operation at Italian territory too. In connection with the transfer of the American Army High Command 7 to North Africa which is under the command of the well experienced General Patton the interest of the American Intelligence Service for the southern French coast which stresses the possibility of a landing operation in Southern France in connection with the sabotage plots in the southern French area is remarkable too.

Eastern Mediterranean:

In consequence of the present attitude of Turkey an intended operation against Rhodes or against another of the Aegean Isles dared to have become questionable because the occupation of the Turkish airfields with the British Air Force has been the supposition for this. But this one does exist no more at present.

The transfer of the 4th British Infantry Division originally projected as air transportation division from Syria to South Italy (possibly transferred in order to occupy the Turkish airfields in December 1943 from French North Africa to Syria) indicates to further easing in the Eastern Mediterranean.

At present no tokens revealed for landing operations at the Balkans from South Italy. The Anglo-American support from here will at first be confined as in the past to the current supply of weapons and equipment as well as to the defense of the life important supply base of Tito, what is the Isle of Lissa.

Increasing cooperation between Allied Headquarters and the Balkans Guerrilla Commands make it possible however, that in future the execution of smaller part operations will appear, whereby the situation of the guerrilla bands and the effort of the enemy Air Force as well as the supply of agents are indicating especially to the Dalmatian coastal sector (Zara-Split) and to the Greece area. In connection with this the transfer of all the Greece troops from Syria to Egypt will appear to be important for a possible evacuation.

Iberian Peninsula:

No positive identifications were submitted on military operations of the Anglo-Americans against Spain and Portugal. The present pliability of the Spanish Government to the Anglo-Saxon demands seems to make a landing operation unlikely at present.

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III. The Operations Div./Naval Staff forwarded the following request to the Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff:

"In consequence of the accentuation of the mine-field situation in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences East and by the sweeping of training-areas for inspectorates and schools the sweeping duties in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences East have increased essentially. The 5th Division of the Minesweeping Group 1 which is subordinated as to operational matters to the Commanding Admiral Defences East with its twelve planes can no more afford the appearing tasks.

Therefore it is requested with recourse to the group reserve respectively to the temporary withdrawal of planes from the Minesweeping-Squadron of the 4th and 2nd Air Force to bring up in total further ten or twelve minesweeping planes to the Baltic Area and to put them at disposal of the Commanding Admiral Defences East.

IV. All the naval forces (patrol boats and destroyers) available now operating in the Skagerrak-patrol against British blockade runners had to be transferred to the Gulf of Finland in consequence of accentuation of the situation at the northern Eastern Front. Therefore owing to lack of vessels the surveying of the Skagerrak became impossible and was suspended, all the more since by the omission of the operation "Greif" the minor efficient survey of the Swedish Skerry-waters ceased. Therewith the British fast merchantmen have the opportunity to pass the Skagerrak unseen and unhindered. This fact induced the Fuehrer to point out checking of all possibilities for stopping this traffic once again.

The Naval Staff judges the possibilities of survey as follows:

In consequence of their high speed the blockade runners pass the Skagerrak from the Skagerrak warning area until entering the Swedish Skerries in six to seven hours. In each case the moment of running the blockade is unknown in advance. Even the leaving of the returning boats from Lysekill respectively the leaving from the skerries will not be recognized in time because the blocking and concealing in port is carried out very conscientiously, the blockade runners often change their berths before leaving and can break out from the Skerry Waters by many different and not clear recognizable outlets.

Therefrom reveals, that a survey can only be efficient if always numerous patrol-boats in several patrol and reconnaissance lines disposed to depth will be at sea. But owing to lack of suitable

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ships this demand cannot be met by the Navy. Besides this, fast vessels with an equal or superior speed as the blockade runners (destroyers, PT-boats) have to be held always in immediate notice in port in order to be sent out in time against reported blockade-runners. (At present there is as fast vessels only one destroyer ready for war available, which cannot continuously lay in readiness.) Even in event of early sighting-report these vessels will mostly come too late and miss the blockade runner. Therefore the fuel consumption and the stress on material by the continuous readiness are very unfavorable compared with the possible but very doubtful prospects of success.

The nightfighter directing ship "TOGO" which was projected for the Skagerrak is extraordinarily endangered from the air because of the radiation of her equipment and therewith the easy getting of bearings. She affords, especially in air threatened areas just as the Skagerrak a strong anti-aircraft protection. Suitable escort vessels for this precious ship are not available in sufficient number. Besides the "TOGO" at present can not be used in free sea area owing to the breakdown of her stabilizing devices and therefore operates in the Gulf of Finland (base Tallinn).

The Naval Staff imposes the opinion, that only by increased effort with patrol- and if necessary with bomber aircraft the enemy blockade running with fast merchantmen could be prevented. She approached her opinion and the limited possibilities of the Navy to the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff who by himself and on the strength of the Fuehrer's utterances has already seized the problem.

The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff/Navy was informed of the above mentioned judgment.

According to information of the Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff Operations Branch/Naval Liaison the TOGO is fully ready for operations.

V. Concerning the transfer of formations to Romania the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command ordered:

"1. The situation in the southern part of the Eastern Front constraints to immediate transfer of headquarters, troops and facilities of the Army and Air Force to North-Romania. According to previous estimation would be in question at first:

In the Army about 1.000.000 men

In the Air Force about 20.000 men

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2. The German General attached to the High Command of the Romanian Armed Forces is instructed for immediate taking up discussions with the Romanian General Staff in the sense of the teleprinter message which will be sent to Marshall Antonescu with the date of 14 March corresponding with the demands of the Services.

3. All the demands of the Services, concerning transfers caused by the situation and questions arisen in connection with this have to be directed to the German General attached to the High Command of the Romanian Armed Forces, who will coordinate them by order of the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command present them to the Royal Romanian General Staff.

The Air Force and Navy is at liberty to choose cooperation with their commands being in Romania.

4. As to the conclusion of agreements with economical nature (such as accommodation, victualling, money supply etc.) which could only be decided by the General attached to the Romanian Armed Forces approval would be set aside for the Chief, Armed Forces High Command. In most urgent cases the disbursement of pay in Romanian currency must be renounced.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff correspondingly informs the Group South.

VI. The report of the visit of the Under Secretary of State of the Italian Navy, Rear Admiral Sparzani on 17 February 1944 was retained for records with 1 SKL S 5615/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

Situation 15 March 1944:

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group eleven, at the 19th Group 60, at the Azores Squadrons one plane was detected on mission. Three British vessels were detected in the rendezvous area.

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2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

The patrol boat 722 [?] after having struck a mine sunk off Brest. Twenty-four men are still missing, or killed in action resp.

Minesweeping and clearing duties were carried out with increased effort. Six mines were swept.

At 1900 the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla left Brest for torpedo operations against eastbound convoys off Land's End. The boats were detected by the enemy reconnaissance.

Channel Area:

Battle brief reports of the PT-boats engagements on the evening of 14 March see Radiogram 0307, 0510 and 2135.

One mine was swept east of Cherbourg.

From 2040 to 2105 the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla was engaged with several enemy PT-boats off Blanc Nez. Four enemy boats were sunk. Only minor own damage.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

The convoy 486 Elbe-Hook proceeded passage from Helder. Four convoys with 72.000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Sea and the Zealand Waters.

Strong penetrations and return flights of enemy bomber and fighter groups were reported in the area of the Northern Netherlands.

Several vessels were slightly damaged in Scheveningen.

Norway, Northern Waters:

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1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group, 13 planes were detected on mission. At 1420 our own air reconnaissance sighted an emerged unknown submarine in 140° 70 miles west of the southerly tip of the Lofotes which did not answer the recognition signal. At 1403 about 200 miles WNW of the southerly tip of the Lofotes an emerged submarine which in approaching turned from 30° to 360° ran high speed and did not answer the recognition signal, was fired on with gunfire, presumably some hits were scored.

2. Own Situation:

On 14 March at 0230 six motor minesweepers put out to sea from Petsamo in order to reconnoitre against Russian naval forces which were located off Petsamo. At 0340 three enemy PT-boats were sighted in AC 8733 which steamed off with high speed.

On 14 March busy routine flights were observed in the area of the Polar Coast. In the exit of Porsanger Fiord one submarine chaser was attacked with air torpedoes without effect. One smack doing passenger shipping in Varangerfiord was attacked by ten enemy planes with bombs and gunfire. Casualties were sustained by men of the Army.

On 14 March at 2100 the steamer "IRMA" (3 757 BRT) loaded with ore ran aground off Frohavet and broke in two later on. On 15 March at 0600 the steamer "EUROPA" (3 767 BRT) loaded with coal was rammed by the tanker "LISA ESSBERGER" off Stavanger and sunk. The crew was rescued.

Twenty-six northbound and 38 southbound ships were escorted.

The supply flight "Bassgeiger" was carried out successfully.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

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There were 27 boats and four minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea Entrances, 39 boats and eight minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea engaged in minesweeping. One ELM/A* [translator's note: type of mine] was swept off Frederikshavn.

Convoys were carried out as planned and without incidents.

The steamer "KNIEPRODE" came free again.

During the night of 13 March sabotage was carried out at the construction site of the transmitter Aarhus. On 15 March the steamer "STRAUSS" (1700 BRT) struck a mine and was damaged.

Owing to mine demolition the patrol boat VS "54" sunk in AO 7812. The crew was rescued.

At the crossroad of the channels 35 and 43, boats of the 1st PT-boats Training Flotilla were fired on by the German steamer "TAURI". The PT-boat S "123" was hit on the forecastle.

The Commander (minelayers) with "BRUMMER", "ROLAND" and "LINZ" is on passage from Pillau to Libau.

The net laying was continued.

After concluding her operation during the night the "TOGO" anchored off Tallinn roads.

For executing the minefield operation "Seeigel" 2 B the destroyers Z "28," "25," "39" and three minesweepers were projected for.

V. Merchant Shipping:

In the brief report No. 4/44 the Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff/Foreign Merchant Shipping is dealing with the import embargo of fuel to Spain, enemy merchant shipping in the harbor of Lisboa during the month of January 1944, air-free-convoy-traffic from Sweden to Great Britain and others. Copy as per 1 SKL 9948/44 Geheim in War Diary Part C Volume XI.

VI. Submarine Warfare:

1. Enemy Situation:

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According to Radio Monitoring one burning ship and the rescue of survivors was reported in FG 2287 (Gulf of Guinea). Possibly result of one of our submarines.

2. Own Situation:

The Submarine U "852" reports sinking of one steamer of 5,000 BRT in large grid square FF.

Nothing particular from the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.

VII. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

During the day there were busy approaches of planes with fighter cover into Belgium/Northern France. Airfields, industrial and transport installations were attacked. There penetrated about 20 planes into Western France, thereof ten ones came from the South.

During the night of 15 the bombing attacks of strong groups in the Netherlands Belgium, North and West France on airfields and railway installations were continued.

Nineteen of our own planes were sent out for harassing attack on London during the night of 15 March.

Reich Territory:

On forenoon, several hundred planes with fighter cover penetrated for attack on Braunschweig. The raid, which especially was directed against the central area of the town and Wattenstaedt is said to have been of medium size. Three hundred and eleven of our own fighters shot down 15 enemy planes. In the evening Stuttgart was attacked by several hundred enemy planes which approached from the West and the South. For diversion one part penetrated into the area of Innsbruck-Starnberger See and retour. The attack was said to have been of medium size. Our own nightfighters shot down eleven planes.

Mediterranean Theater:

With strong forces the enemy attacked traffic communications in North

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and Central Italy. Besides the harbor of Piombino was attacked, whereby two attacking planes were shot down by antiaircraft artillery.

Our own forces attacked Naples during the night of 14 March. According to reports submitted up to now four steamers were hit. On 15 March until the night hours of 16 March the enemy carried through preparations for new attacks in the area of Cassino with about 3,000 planes.

Eastern Area:

1 122 own and 253 enemy missions were counted at the Eastern Front on 14 March. Four own and eight enemy losses were sustained.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0745 seven freighters and three corvettes left Gibraltar Atlantic-bound. In the afternoon there followed eight freighters, two destroyers with two corvettes and one minesweeper.

The "GARIBALDI"/class cruiser reported to leave for the East on 14 March changed the course and left for the Atlantic.

Own Situation:

Owing to bad weather conditions escort and convoy duties were suspended.

The Group West again allowed the ore-traffic on the Spanish east coast after that the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping has confirmed that the fruit shipping was suspended for Germany and that Barcelona is possible to be reached as port of destination for ore shipping. The navigation will be carried out at night. All the steamers have to stop at Port Vendres on their passage to and from. The shipping will be organized by the 6th Coast Patrol Force.

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2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

At 0400 air reconnaissance detected one convoy consisting of eleven transports, eight destroyers and six escort vessels heading 310° south west of Cape Circeo.

According to sighting report there were six PT-boats standing for west of Elba at 1350 on 14 March. Notes of course and speed are missing.

According to Radio Monitoring the UGS 34 is thought to be in the area of Naples.

The strong aerial survey on the Italian west ports is lasting on.

Own Situation:

In the night of 14 March the torpedoboat TA "20" carried out the mine-laying operation "LAUFER" south of Ancona as planned and then entered Venice.

The planned operation of an Italian MAS-boat during the night of 16 March against the beachhead was not carried out owing to weather conditions.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

The Tank Army High Command reported with 14 March: Sighting of two destroyers off the South coast of Corcula and two ships in direction to Mljet.

At 0300 on 15 March false bomb dropping was carried out on our own motor minesweepers south of Pola. The motor minesweepers R "188," "190" and "191" entered Pola in the forenoon and are to be leaving for Brac in the evening.

Again on board of the PT-boat S "113" the engine exploded. Therefore the passage from the North to Corfu is suspended. The Admiral Aegean is planning to retransfer the PT-boats S "601" and G "103" to Salamis for repair. Owing to weather conditions in Central Adriatic Sea the transfer of PT-boats from Pola to Cattaro cannot be carried through on 15 March.

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On inquiry of the Operations Div./Naval Staff (see War Diary 14 March) the Admiral Black Sea reported, that doubts against new operations of the landing company in the Adriatic do not exist and that the company already is put at disposal for this purpose.

b. Aegean:

For a new time the convoys were delayed for 24 hours owing to bad weather. For the rest nothing particular.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Aerial photograph of Poti and Batum revealed the fact, that all combat units of the Russian Black-Sea Fleet were present in these ports. Amount of shipping-in details see situation of the day.

According to Radio Monitoring one submarine B was detected about 60 miles south west of Sevastopol presumably being on return passage and a second one off Tuapse.

For the rest only some small vessels stand for the east coast.

Own Situation:

Nothing particular was reported from the patrol at Dnjepr-Liman. Patrol in the same strength is projected for the night of 15 March. The patrol-line, in the southern outlet of Kerch-Straits consisting of three motor minesweepers had no enemy contact during the night of 14 March. The planned occupation with three naval landing craft during the night of 15 March was not carried out owing to weather conditions.

In the northern part of the Kerch Straits minor crossing was observed, the aerial tramway was in service.

On 14 March at 1000 the 5th Naval Artillery Detachment fired on the enemy troops east of Kolonka. The enemy replied the fire from beach-head.

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On 15 March at 1400 the port-area and the berth of Kamysh Burun was shelled by enemy 17 cm battery. The Naval Landing craft remained undamaged.

Three further results were reached in minesweeping in Danube-estuary by minesweeping planes. The minesweeping was continued by two mine exploding vessels and six minesweeping planes.

In consequence of an information by the General Staff of the Army Liaison Officer Navy the Group South receives the following directive:

1. "The Army intends to keep Nikolaev only for a limited time. Introduce corresponding evacuation in coordination with local Army Headquarters.

2. Development concerning Odessa cannot be figured out. Carry on thinning out according to situation."

For thinning out Nicolaev eleven combined ops. boats, 16 engineer ferries, five assault boats and 20 floating bridge sections put out. Besides 15 lighters and five cranes were towed off by six tugs in direction to Odessa. The rest of the convoy traffic was partially delayed owing to weather conditions.

The Group South instructed the Admiral Black Sea to count on short-termed request of transportation space (naval landing craft etc.) for crossing our own withdrawing troops on Bug-Liman River from Eastern to Western banks and to prepare afterwards mine infection of the Bug-Liman and Dnjepr-Liman. In the present situation the Group considers the possibility to support Odessa very unlikely in contrary to the probability of immediate abandonment. The Admiral Black Sea is to consider this in his precautions for evacuation and is to measure in the sharpest way concerning the necessity of remaining headquarters in Odessa. The infection with mines of Odessa harbor has to be prepared.

Simultaneously the Group South intrusively pointed the Army Group A towards the importance of the support of Odessa for the further Crimea-situation and counted up the disadvantages which may turn out for our own supply in event that enemy occupation of Odessa may occur. The Naval Staff was asked by the Group South to influence the Armed Forces High Command occasionally.

The Armed Forces High Command/Foreign Counter Intelligence II. transmitted the request of the Army High Command 17 for support on the part of the Navy to sabotage plots against railways and enemy strong points at the Western Caucasian Coast. Agents of the Counter Intelligence Service are to be transferred at sea by boat during the night to

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the western Caucasian coast and returned by boats after execution of their tasks in the same night. The Naval Staff commissioned the Admiral Black Sea, with copy to Group South to check in direct coordination with the Army High Command 17 in spite of important doubts against the possibility of execution of those proposals all given possibilities of naval support and to report the result or the intentions.

IX. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

A report of the Naval Attaché Helsinki from 10 March on the situation in Finland 1 SKL 859/44 GKdos Chefs. was laid down in War Diary Part C Volume III.

According to report of the Naval Attaché from 16 April the Government announced a declaration in the Reichstag on 14 March which asked for unanimous agreement to the opinion of inacceptableness of the Russian conditions and which contained the vote of confidence. On 15 March unanimous agreement by all fractions could be brought on in passing on to the order of the day. Therewith the Government is authorized for precautions which seem to be necessary. The answer to Moscow is projected for 17 March. The inner political consequences are still unclear.

Discussion of the Commanding Admirals, Naval Command Baltic, North Sea and Group North/Fleet with the Commander in Chief, Navy, at 1000.

1. The Admiral Kummetz describes the planning for the execution of operation "TANNE". According to his opinion the cover of Hochland occupation with the heavy cruisers PRINZ EUGEN and the SCHEER against Russian naval forces will be necessary.

In the field of the amount of transportation of the army the high number of horses and at the amount of the Air Force the high number of motor cars must be checked.

In discussing the occupation of the Aland-Islands the Commander in Chief, Navy imposes the opinion that at least destroyer cover will be necessary. But those are required for escorting the heavy cruisers PRINZ EUGEN and the SCHEER. In addition to this the Commander, Trainings Unit Fleet proposes to use light cruisers and older ships of the line for these escort operations.

This question is to be checked carefully by Group North/Fleet or by the Trainings Unit Fleet resp., in accordance with the Naval Command East.

The Commanding Admiral, Naval Command East points towards the decreasing darkness. Due to this fact the unobserved approach during the night would not be carried out any more since the beginning of April. The shorter the nights will grow the more the first landing operation would be carried out by strong forces. Uncovered vessels could but put into operation in the following time. The icing question would

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be regarded as settled for this year. The keyword must be issued at the earliest time possible in regard to the preparation of batteries.

The necessity to provide reserves for the space of transportation and the strengthening of antiaircraft armament of the cruisers is still dealt with in details.

2. Then, the command organization in the area of the Skagerrak/Jutland proposed by the Naval Staff was discussed. Doubts were raised only by the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command North Sea, who indeed did not want to agree to the dividing line at the political border but acknowledged the reasons for this intention and, in the present situation, could make no better proposal himself.

3. In the conclusive conference on the situation no particular reports and decisions were made.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the operation "Tanne"

1. The Naval Staff applied to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff/Operation Branch or the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff/Chief of Operation Branch for checking if the number of horses and motor cars provided for "Tanne" could not be restricted in order to simplify the transportation at sea and the landing itself.

Copy of relevant telegram l SKL I op 852 respectively 853/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume III.

2. The inquiry of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy concerning the Finnish naval forces was answered as follows.

"The Finnish naval forces in winter rest. In details: the iron clad VAEINAFOEINEN ready for disposal in case of need, will be ready according to schedule in the beginning of April, in event of eventually docking later.

The minelayer "RUOTSINSALMI" ready. The gunboats "KARJALA", "TURUNMAA" ready. "UUS IMAA", "HAEMEEENMAA" ready in the beginning of April, "AUNUS" clear, "VIENA" ready in the beginning of April. Submarines: two ones ready for 1 April, two ones on 15 April. PT-boats five ones ready, two ones joining each week. Escort vessels (armed tugs), one Aalandsee, one Kotka ready.

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PT-boats and motor minesweepers at present not ready for operation owing to ice."

II. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Army wired with 13 March:

"Development of situation is causing numerous changes of the projected and prepared transfers of forces in event of enemy large scale landing operations. Therefore continuous and detailed working at this subject will not be carried out in future. Reinforcements in cases of "FALKE", "HANNA", "BLUME", "MARDER", "FORELLE" and "GERTRUD" will rather be ordered according to situation, whereby the figures projected up to now previously will not be reached.

The Commanding Admirals, the Commanding Generals, Armed Forces and the Chief of Army Armaments and the Commander Replacement Army, however, further have to count on the ordered withdrawals deducting the forces already transferred to Italy in so far as large scale battles are not already going on in the theaters which are projected for the detailing of forces.

The Groups, Naval Commands East, North, Norway and the German Naval Command Italy will be informed in correspondence with the Operations Div./Naval Staff.

III. In reference to the operation "Gisela (neu)" the Group West reports concerning the PT-boats base off the Spanish North-coast:

"1. For both PT-boats Flotilla Bordeaux and La Pallice has to be provided.

2. Bayonne and Arcachon have to be projected as operational base, the latter with the possibility of recourse to Bordeaux.

3. In St. Jean and Gironde estuary no preparations have to be made."

IV. Referring to the directive from the Group South concerning precautions of the Admiral Black Sea in event of the loss of Nicolaev and Odessa the following Radiogram from the Admiral Black Sea was overheard, partially seriously crippled:

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"1. In event of capture of Nicolaev and Odessa the enemy receives

a. base for surface forces in the north-western area of the Black Sea. According to experiences in the Sea of Azov there must be reckoned that the enemy will immediately transfer PT-boats, motor gun boats by railway across the Dnepr-River. Minelaying and torpedo operations with PT-boats up to at least off St. Georghe-Eupatoria would be possible from Odessa. Owing to minelaying and air endangerment the transfer of larger vessels can less be assured at present.

b. Favorably situated submarine-base. In consequence therefore much better utilization of especially the 200 tons-boats.

c. Basic port for operations against northern Crimea and Roumanian coast.

2. Counter measures:

a. Mine infection with E- and A-mines in event of evacuation of Odessa.

b. Minelaying in Dnepr-Liman estuary.

c. Barrages deeply allocated between Odessa and Tendra.

In shallow waters under 15 m depth also E- and A-mines. (Referring from 2a to e). The transfer of larger vessels to Odessa and their operation from this point must be prevented as otherwise the Crimea-supply will be threatened to the utmost. Therefore sufficient mine-laying materiel must be put at disposal in the fastest manner.

d. Organization of a coastal patrol service at the Roumanian coast, carried out by naval landing craft.

e. Patrol lines on the northern coast of Crimea by naval landing craft and artillery ferries.

f. Strengthening of the coastal defense of the Roumanian coast.

g. Employing of operational forces PT-boats and motor mine-sweeping against presumably soon beginning of enemy shipping Odessa - Skadovsk - Horli and occasionally Odessa - Nicolaev, in so far as our own minefield situation does allow.

h. Operations with Submarines and PT-boats in the northwestern part of the Black Sea as soon as larger vessels or preparations for landing operations would be stated there. Speeding up the supply with submarines of type XXIII.

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i. Immediate operations of the Air Force against identified ship targets at sea."

2. On 14 March the naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army Group A radioed to the Admiral Black Sea:

"Speeded thinning out only ordered for Niko, does not come in question for further installations. In Odessa, shipyard repairs have to be maintained with materiel available in full extent, mainly for repair work. Thinning out of dispensable installations and machinery useful. No further constructions of port and shipyard facilities."

The Naval Staff transmits this overheard radiogram to the Group South.

V. Referring the judgment on the situation of the Air Force Command South East concerning the Aegean (See War Diary 14 March) the Admiral Aegean reports:

"In consequence of the reduction of the enemy air reconnaissance expressed in numbers no facts may be gathered according to our opinion that the enemy will lose the direct control of ship movements in the Aegean. On the contrary, there may be paid attention to the concentration over areas in which convoy-movements were recognized by air reconnaissance or the amount of shipping in ports would make except those ones. Figures of approaching planes spring up as soon as ship movements are reported. Extended reconnaissance during the night.

Examples:

1. On 9 March convoy passage of three torpedo-boats, three submarine chasers, two steamers. Being in the area 18 enemy reconnaissance planes, at night attack on the torpedoboat TA "15" with the effect of sinking her.

2. Transportation flights with Ju 52 from Rhodes. Thereupon attack of Beaufighters at 1731 on 14 March with effect of three downed Ju 52.

3. The amount of shipping in Suda on 15 March was one torpedo-boat, three submarine-chasers, two patrol-boats, one freighter, one motor-sailing ship. Thereupon from 0157 to 0453 on 16 March ten to 15 planes circled in the area of Suda-Rethimnon-Iraklion.

At 0500 laying of ground-mines by planes in Suda-Bight.

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Convoys of the Admiral Aegean are not induced by enemy flights in their planning and execution, but only by the supply of vessels and weather conditions.

VI. Referring to the question of the strengthening of the Aegean Defense the Group South again put up ample detailed judgment. Copy of relevant Radiogram as per 1 SKL I op 721/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff thoroughly agrees with this consideration on the situation as basic idea but, advises the Group that in executing this planning the practical possibilities, that is to say the influences emphasized by the Naval Staff on 1 March must be considered upon strongly. Thereby the influence of the transport and supply facilities is to consider first which has to be brought into accordance with the advanced defense.

VII. In addition to the oral report of the Chief of Shipping and Transport Branch on 20 February 1944 at the Commander in Chief, Navy (see War Diary 20 February) the written report of the journey was submitted. Copy as per 1 SKL 8314/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

VIII. The Group North/Fleet reports, that the midget submarine of the type "BUNTE" was declared mature to production by the Flender - shipyards in Luebeck after having passed the first practical trials.

The Commander in Chief, Navy decided that for the first time 20 boats for training purposes would be commissioned according to the proposal of the Group North/Fleet and that the expert in charge of questions for the Naval Special Operations Unit attached to the Quartermaster Division principally is to obtain personal impressions from the proposed weapon eventually with assistance of referring experts.

IX. Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff informs the Groups and Naval Commands and the German Naval Command Italy in summary from the report on the situation West from 15 March. Copy as per 1 SKL 8394/44 GKdos in War Diary Part D Volume "Enemy records on the Situation."

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Situation 16 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Referring to the loss of the BRAKE the Naval Attaché Tokyo transmits the following opinion:

"The enemy supposed, that after the sinking of "SCHLIEMANN" supply task was still unsolved, therefore new ship to be expected. Meeting point farther to the East, scouting patrols limited by weather conditions, to check by carrier-borne planes. I do not believe that the position was compromised because the supply was going on undisturbed for several days."

Of the reception of the Japanese submarine "KIEFER" the Lieutenant (S.O.) Jaenicke who was passed over as escort officer south-west of the Azores reported already. Copy of the report as per 1 SKL I K 8166/44 GXdos in War Diary Part C Volume I.

II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were ten, at the 19th Group 51 planes were detected on mission. Three British and one American vessel were located in the rendezvous area.

According to Radio Monitoring presumably the enemy carried through a larger minesweeping operation under fighter cover in West-Channel on the morning, in which were engaged one Flotilla Commander and nine escort vessels as well as another vessel.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

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Both, one mine was swept off Brest and St. Nazaire, two mines were swept off La Pallice.

During the night of 15 March the 5th and 9th PT-boats Flotilla putting out from Brest carried out operations against the convoy-traffic off Land's End. Releasing each other enemy planes contacted with the group during the whole approach and dropped bombs for several times. They could not be shaken off. Thereby and by several break downs of machinery our own group was seriously delayed. Because shortly after midnight Radio Monitoring intercepted the warning of the convoy on to which was operated, the planned thrust operation was therefore suspended. All routes which were thought to be convoy channels were swept. On their way back, which was begun at 0220 one group of the 5th PT-boat Flotilla was chased by destroyers. The PT-boat S "143" was hit, the Commanding Officer was wounded. However, the boat could be brought in. The 2nd Group of the 5th PT-boats Flotilla too met enemy destroyers which steamed off at the attack of our own boats and could be shaken off then. On their way back, the 9th PT-boat Flotilla too was fired on by destroyers at first according to location which, however, could be shaken off. Both the Flotillas returned to Brest. Brief report of the Naval Group West see Radiogram 1805.

New operation of the Flotilla is intended during the night of 16 March.

Channel Area:

In the engagement of the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla which met ten enemy PT-boats at 2040 in AN 7991 on her passage from Calais to Boulogne four enemy boats definitely were annihilated. Minor casualties only occurred to our own part. Brief report of the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla see Radiogram 0040, brief report of the Commanding Admiral Defences West see Radiogram 0110.

The Commander in Chief, Navy acknowledged the distinguished performances of the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla under command of 1st Lieutenant Behrends and those of the 36th Minesweeping Flotilla which annihilated in total eight enemy PT-boats by telegram: "Well done".

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

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Since the afternoon of 15 March Radio Monitoring intercepted special aircraft weather observation service over the central North Sea presumably in co-operation with the 18th and 16th Group. Longer Radio messages were transmitted.

2. Own Situation:

Both one mine was swept by planes north of Langeoog and north of Schiermonikoog.

The convoy 487 Elbe-Hook started at 0200.

The 9th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla transferred from Cuxhaven to Hook.

The naval forces of the Commanding Admiral Defences North are executing convoy-minesweeping duties in increased effort.

Five convoys with approximately 44,000 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 17 planes were detected on mission.

2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 14 March the harbor of Vadsø repeatedly was attacked by enemy planes. Two Norwegian smacks were sunk and some casualties are reported. For the rest the penetrations into the areas of Petsamo, Vardoe and Banak was unimportant.

Twenty four northbound and 41 southbound ships were escorted.

The "TIRPITZ" has carried out her trial trip at Bogen-Bay and entered at 1800 in Kaafiord.

The Naval Command Norway reports the dispatch of the 5th Air Force, saying that the Reichsmarschall has ordered the withdrawal of four heavy anti-aircraft batteries from Kristiansand South for the cover of the Molybdenum-Plant Knabengrube. Due to that fact the most

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important convoy port of Norway only is but protected by one heavy Naval A - L antiaircraft battery* and two light batteries of the Air Force.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 33 boats and four minesweeping planes, in the Baltic Sea 44 boats and seven minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. South of Anholt and in the Kiel-Bay one mine was swept. The steamer STRAUSS which was damaged by mine on 15 March in the Kiel Bay, sunk. Off Swinemuende the sinking of one small vessel, presumably the steamer "RUTH GEISS" (258 BRT) loaded with oats was reported.

Convoy traffic was carried out without incidents.

The destroyers are lying in six hours' readiness at Paldiski respectively Tallinn Roads. The AF "32," "35," "56," "50" as well as B "35," "6" and WF "119" and the heavy artillery carrier "West-Flandern" arrived at Tallinn.

The 1st Motor Minesweeper Flotilla with six boats transfers from Libau to Tallinn. The Commander (minelayers) is in Tallinn with the "BRUMMER", the "ROLAND" and "LINZ" are lying at Libau.

The "TOGO" with minesweeper M "453" anchored at Tallinn Roads after night operations.

The barrage Seeigel B 2 was laid as planned. The laying of the net barrage was continued. From Narva-Bay no particular reports were submitted. During the night of 15 March five armed fishing vessels of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla were detailed to aircraft watching positions.

Regarding the situation on the mainland the Admiral Baltic Countries reports strong enemy attacks against the Gorodenka-Front carried out with tank support, essential own casualties. A salient thrust-key position north of Gorodenka was withdrawn. Strong enemy attacks were carried out on the Narva-beachhead. Lilienbach was lost. A penetration 100 m wide north of it was cut off.

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During the night of 15 March Hungerburg was shelled for short time only but violently. The battery of Merekuela fired on the enemy battery at the southerly tip of Magerburg and scored good hits in the target.

The Naval Command East reports of the result of the discussion with the Chief of Staff of Commander (minesweepers) East and the Finnish General Valve. There is planned

a. Reinforcing the Ruckajaervi-barrage with 400 mines and closing the barrage gap east of Hochland with 100 mines and laying of an outflanking barrage of 100 mines east of the Aspe-Skerries.

b. The laying of operative barrages or infections of the eastern Gulf of Finland resp. as well as bombardment positions east of Hochland with mines and buoys with antisweep cutter by the Finns will occur in accordance with us.

c. Increased operation with Finnish PT-boats in connection with the German Navy. Torpedoes are running short.

d. The Finns want to secure Hochland east and west about 1000 m off the shore with mines on shallow waters. They suppose that occasionally the Russians eventually will break through south of the Island and also would land coming from the west with bombardment of the Russian Fleet at the same time.

e. Just as in 1943 the Finns will secure the fighter protection of the netlayers in the North.

f. They request for 1.000 buoys with anti sweep cutter.

g. The General Valve declared sponsored by himself that according to his opinion peace with Russia would not come into question. The whole Finnish Armed Forces would oppose this.

V. Submarine Warfare:

1. Enemy Situation:

Colombo reports Submarine attack at 1148 in 5810 and transmitted submarine warning calls for L J8530.

2. Own Situation:

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The Submarine U "311" listened a convoy in BE 2260 in the North Atlantic.

The Group "Preussen" transfers its operational areas on to 180 miles in the direction of 160°. In order to aggravate statements by the enemy it is planned not to set up the boats at one place but mobil.

The Submarine U "801" was attacked by two flying-boats in EH 3811 and slightly damaged. The Commanding Officer was slightly and five other men seriously wounded.

For the rest nothing to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

During the day numerous missions from England into Belgium/Northern France were carried out where airfields were attacked. One Ju 188 and three Ar 96 planes were shot down in doing training flights.

Twelve planes coming from the South attacked and damaged two small merchantmen off the southern coast at Port St. Louis. Further attacks on airfields were carried out by gunfire of the strong enemy groups which were penetrating into the Reich territory.

During the night of 16 March about 200 enemy missions were reported into Belgium/Northern France. In Western France the Michelin-Plants in the area of Clairmont-Ferrand were attacked.

From the South 35 enemy penetrations into the area of Perpignan without attacks were reported.

Reich Territory:

Strong enemy bomber groups with fighter cover penetrated into the area of Augsburg. From 1210 - 1250 the town was attacked from the West and South-West. In the outskirts of the town great damage was inflicted to living quarters and industrial plants. In Lechhausen serious casualties were suffered under the mass of workers of the Messerschmitt Plant, because several splinter proof trenches were directly hit. A further attack was carried out on Friedrichshafen. Also on Ulm and a number of country villages in the area of Ulm, Augsburg, Ingolstadt several bombs were dropped. Own defense results not yet reported.

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During the evening hours approximately 70 - 80 enemy planes were observed in the area north of Borkum presumably laying mines. Further 20 enemy planes carried out attacks in the area of Cologne.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 15 March more than 1000 planes attacked our own main line of defense and positions in the area of Cassino.

In the remaining Front area another 350 enemy planes operated. Six planes were shot down by antiaircraft artillery and fighters. The port and railway facilities of St. Benedetto, the airfield of Rieti and one train at Terni were attacked. Only minor effect.

Nine enemy reconnaissance planes were recognized in the area of Crete-Rhodes during the night of 15 March some more in the Adriatic. Twenty planes dropped bombs scattered over the whole area of Sofia.

On 16 March our own planes of the 2nd Air Force carried out reconnaissance operations.

Eastern Area:

On 15 March 450 enemy and 933 own missions were reported from the Eastern Front. Fifteen enemy planes were shot down, five of our own planes were lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

At 1130 two steamers being engaged in gravel traffic for the Organization Todt were attacked by eight enemy planes with bombs and gunfire south of Port de Bouc and so seriously damaged that they sunk in the evening.

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2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

Referring to picture spotting there, two PT-boats, two escort vessels, 24 large, eight medium-sized and two small landing craft, were lying in Anzio in the morning.

According to sighting five large and eleven medium-sized transports, one destroyer and 15 escort vessels and landingcraft sailed south of Nettunia.

At 0900 four destroyers in covering these vessels and two destroyers north of Ponza were recognized.

Strong navigation was observed at the Italian East coast in the area of Vieste-Otranto on the afternoon of 15 March. The aerial survey of the Western and Eastern Italian ports is continuing to be strong.

Own Situation:

The enemy air raids of 15 March on Piombino - La Spezia - Viareggio inflicted no damage. In repeated air raids on Benedetto the railway installations were interrupted for several times. Three attacking planes were shot down by antiaircraft artillery. On the noon of 16 March serious enemy air raid took place on Leghorn. The submarine chaser "2209", one steamer and two tugs sunk in the harbor. Another tug was damaged. In the air raids on Viareggio which was attacked three times bombs were dropped on the shipyards on the harbor and railway installations but did not inflict important damage.

At her trial trip off Spezia the torpedoboat TA "24" was attacked by fighter bombers and scored minor splinter damage. One plane was shot down.

On 15 March convoy and patrol duties were curtailed owing to weather conditions. Minesweeping was suspended too.

Our own submarines meet strong enemy defense in the landing area. Therefore the chances for success are very limited and the boats widely endangered. Therefore the Commander Submarines Mediterranean receives the directive, that the order of disposing five boats in the waters of Naples - Nettunia (See War Diary 6 March) was cancelled.

The Commander Submarines Mediterranean is to report new operational areas in the western Mediterranean with the directive that now as

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before the aim will be: to support the fighting troops in the beach-head in the best possible way.

The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy, the German Naval Command Italy and the Commanding General, Armed Forces West will be informed of this new directive.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

At 0615 there stood two thought to be destroyers for 48 miles NE of Termoli sailing with high speed presumably on their return passage from the Dalmatian coast in a south-easterly course. At 0930 two escort vessels were reported 32 miles east of Termoli and one coastal freighter and two escort-vessels were reported 17 miles NE of Vieste heading South.

At 0340 four units stood on the beam for Cattaro-Bay in ten or twelve miles distance off the land, suspected to be convoy with air-cover on northerly course.

At 0050 during the night of 13 March a burning ship was observed from Zara after antiaircraft fire took place west of the isle of Murter.

Own Situation:

On 13 March the steamer "DAKSA" (1246 BRT) sank in Dubrovnik after being hit by two direct bomb hits. On 16 March one coastal motor drifter in Zara was damaged by fighter bomber attack and another one was damaged off Zara. One coastal motor drifter sank in the vicinity of Pola.

During the night of 15 March the PT-boats S "36" and S "61" transferred from Pola to Cattaro. On 16 March the PT-boats R "188," "190" and "191" entered the NE-Bay of Brac. The boats are to carry out mine-sweeping in the area of Brac in the evening.

b. Aegean:

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The port-entrance of Suda was infected with mines by enemy planes and temporarily closed.

Owing to explosion of pressured air containers, the GA "24" sank in the Bay of Vuliagmeni.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring two destroyers were sailing 20 miles south of Sotschi at 1437 coming from the South and heading north-western course. At 1600 the vessels were sighted with fighter cover about five miles south of Sotschi and at 1930 10 miles west of Tuapse heading course to Tuapse. The reconnaissance from Skadovsk to Perekop resulted no identifications.

Own Situation:

During the night of 15 March and on the evening of 16 March Sofia was attacked by minor enemy air forces. Naval quarters remained undamaged. No casualties sustained.

At 1420 one of our own convoys was attacked by enemy air forces without effect 100 miles west of Sevastopol. During an air raid on the base of the special operations group Dnjpr carried out by 14 planes, one naval landing craft and another vessel were damaged. A low level bombing attack on Ochakov carried out by 21 enemy planes inflicted no damage.

Owing to bad weather the patrol vessels of the Dnjpr-Liman entered the Bug-River during the night of 15 March. One naval landing craft was fired on from the eastern bank of the River. Resumption of Dnjpr-Liman patrol is planned for the night of 16 March by four naval landing craft.

The River tug "ELBING" ostensibly was captured by the enemy on her passage from Nicolaev - Odessa.

Owing to bad weather the towed convoy Nicolaev - Odessa was disposed. Up to now there was stated that one lighter sank and four lighters and three barges stranded.

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From 0640 heavy gunfire was imposed on Ochakov. Two tugs were hit thereof one of them sunk. On 15 March the 3rd Battery of the Naval Artillery Detachment 613 was bombarded with different calibers. No casualties.

Owing to bad weather the patrol of the Kerch-Straits did not put out to sea during the night of 15 March. The patrols will be operated by three naval landing craft during the night of 16 March.

In the Bay of AK Metchet stranded one lighter, at Eupatoria one lighter and one river-patrol boat ran aground. Owing to bad weather conditions the PT-boats, motor minesweepers and submarine chasers did not operate.

The minesweeping at the Danube was concluded, the blocking was released.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

The British and USA-Governments try to obtain an explanation from the Russian Government on behalf of her decision of taking up direct relations with the Badoglio-Government. The Manchester Guardian confirms that this step of Moscow came wholly unforeseen for London and has proved how little the allied diplomacy cooperated together. Unfortunately, the resumption of diplomatic relations between Badoglio and Moscow has taken place in a moment where tensions have appeared between the Allied Governments and the democratic parties in South Italy. The "Times" states that the Allied counsel committee did not fulfill the expectations which had been attached to it. The "New York Times" points at the Russian plan to strengthen the Russian influence on the Balkans.

Following the "Daily Telegraph," de Gaulle also asked permission for the appointment of a diplomatic representative in Moscow.

At the Berghof, the Bulgarian council of regency was received by the Fuehrer for discussions.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy:

I. The Quartermaster General:

- a. The Reichsfuehrer SS agreed with the transfer of four police fighting boats to the Navy for operations on Lake Peipus.
- b. The construction of the base near Kusantip (Sea of Azov) began. As first period of construction the mole is to be accomplished in the middle of May this year.
- c. On application concerning the raising of fuel allocation to the Navy, the Chief, Armed Forces High Command principally acknowledged the requirement but expressed that no full realization of this demand could be expected however.
- d. Concerning the construction site of Salonika, the Quartermaster Division is planning to approach the Chief Committee for Naval Construction again after seeing that the Krupp firm is establishing there an own construction site which extended to somewhat larger site could be projected to simultaneous needs of the Navy.

The Commander in Chief, Navy approves this.

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II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

The King of Sweden addressed a message to the Marshal Mannerheim and to the President of the State Ryti in which the resumption of peaceable relations with Russia were recommended.

The Finnish Cabinet is said to have come to the decision to ask for a new term of 14 days from Moscow. This information was not confirmed.

III. The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff/Foreign Navies. points out, just as a year before that presumably a stop lasting from the middle of February to the beginning of November may also happen in this year in the Qu P-convoy shipping. Up to now, no serious tokens revealed for the beginning of a new convoy on this route.

IV. The Foreign Affairs Section/Naval Staff reports on the question of the arrest of the Admiral Robert (Vichy) if need be whose attitude against the Anglo-Saxon is quite certain. The Commander in Chief, Navy approves that for this step consent is not granted.

In a highly Restricted Circle:

V. Oral Report of the Chief of Organization and Mobilization Branch and the Chief of the Shipping and Transport Branch on the proposal of the Commanding Admiral of the Naval Command Norway concerning the transfer of the control of the Merchant Shipping in the area of Norway by the Navy. The application is now submitted in writing. The Chief of Organization and Mobilization Branch discussed this question in Oslo. The Naval Staff supports the conception that control would be taken up only in the beginning of fighting operations. Even loose survey should be avoided during the preceding time of tensions. The preparing establishment of corresponding commands of the Navy and the National Commissioner of Sea Shipping will be necessary in order to transfer the control without difficulties in event of A-occasion. The Commanding Admiral of the Naval Command Norway joined this conception.

But no agreement in this question could be reached, however, with the Commanding General Armed Forces, Norway. The Army only looks at this matter from the stand of mainland warfare.

The Chief of the Shipping and Transport Branch reports of a widely arranged action of justification of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping at the cost of the Navy. The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping raises the statement that the blame for failure of transportation in the Mediterranean Theater was laid to the Navy. Only good relations would exist with the new Commander in Chief, Navy. The Supply and Transportation Office, Armed Forces Overseas proved true to the very best.

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On 29 March the Commander in Chief, Navy will discuss this problem with the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping himself. In meantime the request for transfer of the control of merchant shipping in the area of Norway in event of imminent large scale battle actions is to be directed to the Armed Forces' High Command/Operations Staff with information of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping.

VI. Army Situation:

Informations and tokens about plans of landing operations and attacks of the Russians at Crimea are lasting on. Strong enemy forces are concentrated against the bridgehead of Nicolaev. Holding of Nicolaev was ordered. Enemy plans of outflanking operations may be possible. The development of situation at the Army Group South is judged very serious in the Fuehrer's Headquarter too. Evidently, in knowledge of some gaps, the enemy put up decision to advance in masses towards the Dneestr. Tank spearheads pushed forward unto Jampol. Vinnitsa was attacked from all sides. Generally enemy attacks in the area of Tarnopol were stopped. Stronger point of concentration is lying near Kovel. Just as in the area of the 2nd Army local enemy pressure was reported in the area of the Central Army Group. At the Narva-Front the enemy started stronger attacks.

Generally, the attacks in Italy at Cassino were repulsed. Continuation will be expected.

Special Items:

I. The Naval Staff informs the Group South of the following letter of the Chief, Armed Forces High Command to the Marshal Antonescu from 14 March:

"The present development of the situation in the South of the Eastern Front confronts the German Command with the decision to transfer within shortest time the supply bases of two armies which operate there into the northern Roumanian area and beyond this to transfer staffs and troops to Roumania in an extent limited to the utmost now as before. The strength of the Army Sections coming into consideration is at first to be expected with about 100.000 men and the strength of the Air Force formations with the least 20.000 men.

In order to continue this battle with promising successful effect and also for effective securing of the Roumanian area too this measurement became irrevocably necessary.

Therefore, I beg your Excellency to advise the Royal Roumanian General Staff to enter negotiations on this question with the German General attached to the Roumanian Armed Forces High Command immediately. The

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German General attached to the Roumanian Armed Forces High Command was charged with relevant directives by myself.

May I express the hope that regulations will be found in consultation to both sides which in the farthest possible maintenance of the Roumanian economical interests will guarantee the successful continuation of our joint struggle in the best way."

II. The Group South informatorily instructs the Naval Staff of the judgment which was sent to the Tank Army High Command 2 concerning the necessity of the capture of Vis and Logosta in the earliest possible time. Copy as per 1 SKL 8363/44. GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

The judgment corresponds to the conception of the Naval Staff.

III. According to instructions the Hydrographic and Meterological Division worked at the unified navigation chart of the Danube for the purpose of military and general shipping, partially on the basis of fully new plannings. Now preparations have made progress so far that publication of these charts will begin soon.

IV. The Intelligence Division transmits reports of an agent working in the office of an military Attaché of the Enemy Powers in the neutral foreign countries. Concerning the plannings of invasion by the Allies the following is said thereon.

1. "By all means one is trying, to induce Finland to an agreement with Russia in order to create Allied bases in the North in this way and from there to roll up the German Front in Norway with simultaneous landing operations at the Atlantic coast.

2. Informations which are speaking from eventually not occurring invasion operations turn out to be informations for special purpose and it is planned to carry out the main thrust against the continent during the last third of the month of April.

3. The invasion starts from southern British ports referring to cypher two and it is to be landed at the Dutch-German coast.

4. Among others 120.000 men of airborne troops are in preparation for this invasion."

The Allied plans against Spain and Portugal are said to be as following:

1. "In the first instance Portugal will not enter the war and no occupations by the Allies are planned at the Portuguese coast after all.

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2. The Cape Verde Islands are excluded, the occupation of which is planned in order to create further bases.

3. The main interest is turning to Spain already revealing from the fact that especially the Americans essentially increased the American personnel of the embassy in Madrid particularly in the offices of the military attachés.

4. Without mentioning the strong economical pressure which continuously is imposed on Spain, there exist plans to create airfields in Valencia and Malaga, but in contrary to that there does not exist the plan to occupy the Balearic Isles in the moment.

5. The American Secret Service succeeded in taking up contact with the Spanish Air Force. But in contrary to that leading officer circles of the Spanish Navy and of the Spanish Army refused the American endeavours.

6. Blocking of petrol imports to Spain. Without mentioning the political pressure, which one is imposing on Spain in this manner one is to prevent that the Spanish Armed Forces may invest certain stocks of petrol in order to weaken the defense forces of the Spanish Armed Forces.

Situation 17 March 1944:

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area

Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group were 20 at the 19th Group were 47 planes and at the Azores Squadrons there was one plane detected on mission. Three British and one USA-vessel was located in the rendezvous area.

According to Radio Monitoring on 12 March ciphered radiograms were intercepted from 1929 - 2156 in the British Home Area which up to now were observed in this manner only at landing operations of the Italian Fighting Area. Presumably landing exercises were carried out.

Own Situation:

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Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Six outgoing and one entering submarine were escorted. Mines were swept as follows: in the area of Lorient one, in the area of La Pallice three and in the area of St. Nazaire two.

On 14 March at 0100 a French steam trawler was sunk by enemy planes in BF 5545.

The blocking of Brest-roads was released. During the night of 16 March destroyers and torpedoboats escorted the convoy "CHARLOTTE" and entered Brest at 0800.

Channel Area:

During the night of 16 March the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla operated in the western Plymouth-Bay without sighting the enemy.

The flotilla entered Cherbourg. Brief report see Radiogram 0128.

Towards midnight of 16 March the 18th Patrol-Boat Flotilla consisting of four boats was repeatedly attacked by fighter bombers without effect in BF 3161.

From 0008 - 0031 the army coastal battery nine and ten fired 19 rounds on located enemy targets off Fécamp without noticeable effect. Shortly before midnight the battery Paimpol fired on located sea targets in BF 2961.

The convoy "CHARLOTTE" entered Lezardrieux and continued proceeding to Cherbourg at 2000.

During the night of 17 March the transfer of the steamer "HECHT" from Boulogne to Dunkerque is planned.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

Convoy, escort and minesweeping was carried out as planned in strong effort. Both one mine was swept off Wangerooge and off Cuxhaven. One British motorboat drifted ashore at Ymuiden and was safeguarded.

The convoy 1230 Hook-Elbe put out to sea with six steamers.

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Four convoys with 60,000 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters.

On 16 March at 1820 one Dutch towed convoy in the Zuider Sea was raided with bombs and sustained no damage.

Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group Command twelve planes were detected on mission. At 1815 one plane was located in AN 4610 transmitting weather reports.

At 1439 one British vessel was located in 4119. Another vessel transmitting urgent radiograms at 1849 was detected in AN 6447.

At 1150 one Russian reconnaissance plane reported the passing of Pers-Fiord by one of our own convoys. Besides, presumably one of our own convoys bound for the East at 0750 in Kongofiord. Still more ships were reported off Makkaur in 110°.

Own Situation:

At 0945 one of our own eastbound convoys was attacked by submarines with two missing rounds in the outlet of Syltefiord. The convoy was detected by enemy air reconnaissance and attacked by enemy air groups with bombs and torpedoes at 1030, 1115 and 1545 in the area of Vardoe. No damage. Out of 50 attacking planes our fighter shot down 32 ones and the naval antiaircraft artillery two other planes.

Thirty six northbound and 32 southbound ships were escorted.

The battleship "TIRPITZ" reported execution of trial trip on 15 and 16 March. The ship armament and the engine is fully ready as to material matters except the cruising turbine which showed unbearable vibrations. At first the ship is doing remnant repairs.

From the operations with the automatic weather transmitters carried out during the year 1943 the operations "Dietrich" and "Christian" are still operating at the Bear-Island since 7 September respectively 6 December 1943. Two devices have run down after about 70 days of working and a 5th device broke down according to technical failure. On the strength of these satisfactory results of this year strengthened current operations of FW-land devices is projected from the Hydrographic and Meteorological Div. and here they are: at the Bear Island in the 2nd part of April, at Novaya Zemlya in July, at Franz Joseph's Land at the occasion of the evacuation of operation "Schatzgraeber," at Northern Spitzbergen at the evacuation of

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operation "Kreuzritter" and at the east-coast of Greenland at the evacuation of operation "Bassgeiger."

The Hydrographic and Meteorological Div. requested the Group North/Fleet to arrange for the operation with these devices. At each time the Chief of Naval Communications will report the readiness for service in the port of departure.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the Baltic Approaches 32 boats and four minesweeping planes, in the Baltic Sea 35 boats and four minesweeping planes were engaged in mine-sweeping. The convoys were carried out as planned and without incidents.

At 2040 the submarine U "286" was rammed by U "1013" east of Ruegen. The submarine U "1013" sunk to the half. Up to now ten men were rescued.

The Commander of the 1st Motor Minesweepers Flotilla with five boats is proceeding from Libau to Tallinn. The netlaying is continued in the Gulf of Finland.

Regarding the mainland situation the Admiral Baltic Countries reports enemy harassing fire on own batteries in the sector of Hungerburg, which was replied by our own batteries.

V. Submarine Warfare:

At the afternoon, the submarine U "311" was pushed away from the north sailing convoy and presumably sunk one destroyer by Zaunkoenig* torpedo. In 9524 the submarine U "415" received heavy depth charging by a fighter group and began to return to home base owing to damages. At 1804 the submarine U "549" sighted one passenger steamer in BF 4748 heading SW. From EB 6896 the submarine U "518" reported air raid and later on seriously ruptured report of position concerning

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the Caribbean Sea. No further important reports.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

During the day, airfields in the Dutch-Belgium and northern French area and besides this the marshalling yard of Crail was attacked by strong groups escorted by fighters. At the latter serious damage was inflicted, a number of planes was destroyed respectively damaged at the airfields. In Western France 120 enemy planes were reported in the area of Orleans, Angers, Brest without attacking. The airfield of Le Bourget was attacked with gunfire by 20 planes. During the night of 17 March about 40 enemy planes in the Belgian area and one plane in the western French area without attacking.

Fifteen Me 410 from which twelve reached the target attacked London in the evening from 7 - 8000 m altitude.

Reich Territory:

During the afternoon hours Wien was attacked by several hundred planes, from 6003 m which approached from the South. Presumably, the target of attack was the Heinkel-Plant. Owing to bad weather conditions, however, only minor damage was inflicted. Our own antiaircraft artillery shot down four planes.

During the evening hours isolated planes attacked Cologne and Aachen. Other isolated planes penetrated into the area of Radom.-Krakau coming from Slovakia, presumably in order to drop agents.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 16 March 400 enemy planes operated in the Italian Front Area with focal point on Cassino, seven of them were shot down by antiaircraft artillery. Besides this the Fiat-works (at Pisa) Leghorn, San Benedetto and the railway station of Ancona were attacked.

During the night of 16 March 31 Ju 88 operated against sea-targets off the beachhead. One freighter was sunk, two freighters, two landing craft and one destroyer were damaged. On the morning of 17 March own plane carried out reconnaissance flights.

Eastern Area:

On 16 March there 776 own and 170 enemy planes at the Eastern Front were reported. 15 enemy planes were shot down.

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Planes of the 4th Air Force carried out photographic reconnaissance of Rostow as well as from the Black Sea and Azow-Sea ports. No new identifications.

The successful operation of the 5th Air Force at Vardoe was already reported.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

In the morning one convoy consisting of 28 freighters and one destroyer and five corvettes entered Gibraltar coming from the Atlantic. Towards midday one large convoy of two transports, 18 freighters, seven corvettes passed the Gibraltar narrows westbound.

In the morning one heavy cruiser coming from the West entered Gibraltar, one "CAIRO"-class cruiser left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean. Coming from the Mediterranean eight freighters, one monitor and one escort vessel entered Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

Four convoys with 13,500 BRT were carried out off the French South Coast.

Owing to losses of the steamer "CABYLE" and "MAURA" shipping only is admitted between Port de Bouc and Marseille during the night.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

In the early hours of the morning one convoy consisting of ten large freighters, one transport with twelve escort vessels was detected approaching Anzio in the area off the beachhead. Moreover single proceeding ships were at the same course. Five destroyers and seven escort vessels formed a patrol line west of Anzio to Cape Circeo. The German Naval Command Italy reports, that according to the latest identifications the freighters remain lying at anchor directly off the ports and continue unloading even during the night. The main supply predominantly was brought on during the night. The departing convoys assemble south of Anzio during the late afternoon hours.

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Own Situation:

On the morning of 16 March one of our own convoys was attacked presumably by PT-boats with torpedoes from the shoreside without effect northwest of Avorno mouth.

Owing to enemy air raids on 16 March two shipyards burned out at Viareggio. Except the damage already reported in the air raid on Leghorn on 16 March another two auxiliary minesweepers were hit.

Four motor minesweepers swept the channel Piombino Spezia without result.

Minelaying operation east of Ravenna was carried out as planned. During the night of 17 March the operation of an Italian MAS-boat off the beachhead is projected.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

According to report of the Intelligence Div. from 10 March the control of the Isle of Vis was essentially strengthened. At 0630 our own air reconnaissance sighted 20 boats in Comitza, 48 boats in Vis and one freighter in Balista.

Own Situation:

In an enemy air raid on Zara on 15 March four coastal motor sailing ships were damaged, one of them sunk and one had been set aground. During the same day Split was attacked nine times and Trogir seven times from the air.

The tanker "GUILIANA" which entered Split on 16 March reported, that she was approached by two unknown boats during her passage from Sibenik and Drvenik and that after having fired on them the crew jumped overboard, swam ashore. Furthermore the tanker "GUILIANA" sighted a burning motor sailing ship which was sunk by two PT-boats.

During the night of 17 March operation with PT-boats S "36" and S "61" is planned in the area of the Central Dalmatian Islands.

Belated was reported, that during the night of 22 February one tug and nine small ships were sunk by partisans in the harbor of St. Lorenzo near Albuna.

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b. Aegean:

At 0310 the convoy "AGATHE" was detected by enemy air reconnaissance north of Iraklion. Eight boats of the Defense Flotilla Attica are put at disposal for screening the coast during a mopping-up operation planned for 20 March. According to reports of the Assault-Division Rhodes the attempt for landing which was made by a small enemy intruder patrol on the harbor of Tilos was repulsed.

On 12 March two naval landing craft and one Siebel ferry thoroughly searched Bulsa Bight near Monembasia with infantry cover without result. Leaving Monembasia the two barges were attacked with two unsuccessful torpedoes. A third torpedo hit a wreck near the coast.

At 0705 Otshakov was attacked by seven planes in low level flight. At 0915 Feodosia was attacked by about 40 planes. The anti-aircraft artillery shot down three fighters and four planes. No damage nor casualties did occur during these attacks on the side of the Navy.

During the night of 16 March naval ferry barges operating in patrol lines at Kerch Straits off Tusla were shelled by a 17 cm battery without effect.

The Crimea-Convoys were carried out without particular incidents.

The Naval Staff informs the Armed Forces High Command, Counter Intelligence concerning the sabotage plots at the West Caucasian coast, that in spite of essential doubts the Admiral, Black Sea was instructed to examine all possibilities for naval support in close coordination with the Army High Command 17 for this operation and to report the result or the plans.

c. Black Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

One naval landing craft operational group in the Dnieper repulsed the attack of two enemy planes at 0507 and then repulsed continuous attacks and shot one plane down.

VII. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

For a new time the demand for the Second Front was raised in the Soviet Press. The only way to annihilate Germany would be the realization of the simultaneous operations which were planned and decided in Teheran.

Following Reuter the Government of the Soviet-Ukraine raised territorial claims which exceeded essentially far west from the Curzon-Line.

The Canadian Prime-Minister declared that Canada should have renounced every payment of nearly all war deliveries to the Allies.

According to Reuter the USA does not consider to take the diplomatic legitimation of the Badoglio-Government into consideration.

Among others, the Intelligence Division reports the Anglo-Saxon plans of invasion-operations from a London source around Eden via the neutral communication service:

"On the occasion of a banquet given by the Royal Naval Club, the General Montgomery explained to a friend, that in spite of all successes the Russian offensive operation would be in delay for about two months. That is to say, that its present stand would not comply with exactly the plans which existed on the side of the Russians and which played an important part in the Teheran-conference. The reasons to this delay should be:

1. the mild winter-season
2. the stubborn German resistance in the Dnjepr-turning.

Today the Allied High Command seems to make use of the Russian promises in Teheran concerning their offensive operations for political purposes. In addition to that no word can be said of an offensive operation against the Atlantic-Wall for the only possibility of successful landing operations would lay in the Balkans.

At the same occasion the following utterances of Mr. Eden made in an intimate circle could be put down:

The British and American Governments would hope to be prepared so far until March that they could carry out the planned invasion operation at the Balkans with the agreement of Moscow. But unfortunately, this date would pass without making an agreement with Moscow in this respect. Here among ourselves there are people who would even carry out this planned operation without the Russian consent. This, however, would hardly be possible and at present the discussions will be

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continued intensively. The promise for delivery of one third of the Italian Fleet to the Russian must be valued in this sense.

At any rate one will do right in counting on an overall due prolongation of war beyond 1944. There may be added to all this that not only the Russian offensive operation alone did advance less far than one had expected but that also the British-American offensive operation in Italy did so. Today, the bridgehead of Anzio became the greatest trouble of the High Command. However, in contrary to that, the operation of Anzio revealed something of the German strength of defense to the Allied General Staff. It may be assumed that the strength of the German Armed Forces even after four years war was not estimated right by Allied experts. Today one has to understand absolutely that one considered the weakening of the Reich to be more advanced as it really is at this moment.

Nobody in the world can expect that we will bring the planned large invasion a similar fate as it happened to be with the partial invasion at Anzio. Therefore today and in the following weeks and eventually still much longer, there will be no other offensive operation but the one of the further increased aerial warfare. Moreover the majority of the members of the Supreme Council of War is believing, that an aerial offensive operation against Germany constantly increased and continued would perhaps even now bring the decision."

In regard to the same theme another Counter Intelligence report announces from reliable diplomatic sources from London:

"According to a number of political reasons the invasion will be expected in leading circles in late spring at the beginning of summer of this year. Nevertheless, the publicity and to a large extent circles of the Armed Forces too (which are not informed) are believing that according to the further progressing aerial offensive operation an invasion against Western Europe would not be necessary. Furthermore British and American officials launch the news that at first no one has to count on such an invasion. In every respect this kind of report must be looked at as false information. The initial assembly of Anglo-American Army groups, leaving out the very strong billeting all over Great Britain just the same as in Northern England and Scotland reveal tokens especially in Southern England. The American troops are stationed in the western part approximately up to the line Southampton-Oxford and the British troops in the eastern part. The aerial concentration as just mentioned above could be recognized to a wide extent and will be transmitted currently during the next days.

Regarding the situation in Finland the German ambassador submitted a report dated 14 March according to which the resistance against the acceptance of the Russian conditions is noticeably growing in the Finnish population.

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Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy:

Army Situation:

Strong enemy forces stepped at Bessarabian soil. The direction of thrust aims to Romania. It would hardly be possible to close the approximately 150 km wide gap in the own front.

The withdrawal of the 6th Army behind the Bug-River or in the bridge-head of Nicolaev resp. is going on as planned.

In the area of the Army Group North too heavy large scale battles are kindled. However the enemy thrust against Riga was repulsed.

In Italy the battle of Cassino kindled for a new time.

For the rest no particular reports and decisions.

Special Items:

I. In event that in case of attack a command organization in good practice concerning the Fuehrer's directive 51 may exist already and enable the control of preparations by the Group North/Fleet in a sufficient manner, the assumption of the higher command by the Group North/Fleet is to come into action already now.

The relevant directive of the Naval Staff was issued to the partners.

II. With the Group South was agreed by phone that the Naval Staff would apply immediately at the German General attached to the High Command of the Romanian Armed Forces for the transfer which depends on the present situation of the naval contingent of 5.000 men and which the more is for the whole area especially for Constanța, Galatz, Braila.

Settlement by the Organization and Mobilization Branch.

III. The Army Group E informs the Operations Div./Naval Staff info. of its viewpoint to the judgment of the Group South concerning the situation of transportation (see War Diary 14 March). The Army Group

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particularly acknowledges the performances which were executed during the last days under most difficult conditions and which eased the supply-situations of Crete. Adequate interference is expected by the Group concerning the demands of foreign currency. Regarding the relaxation of the harbor regulations of Piraeus the Army Group is awaiting the proposals of the Naval Group. After discussing some detailed questions on the improvement of transportation the judgment is concluded as follows:

"Further most severe exertion of all means for improvement of the Islands-supplies and stocks is urgently needed and requested. At every time it must be counted on newly increased enemy action probably against minesweepers too. The Army Group must consider the supply situation very critical in the case that for a longer time the daily ration of bread must be reduced to 300 grammes without having the possibility of compensation with other food."

IV. The Quartermaster Division/Submarines ordered:

1. "Begin with the repair of the Italian special service Submarines "MORENA," "SPAREDE," "GRONGO" for the special operations detachment. At first the question of crews remains unsolved and must be settled later on.

2. The repair of these three boats concerning to 1. needs a very long time. Regarding to this reason there must be examined if a German submarine of the type VII C could be reconditioned with additional special equipment for operations with the so-called "Schweine."* The reconditioning has to be made in such a way, that the special equipment can be removed, so that this boat only has to be put at disposal for occasional exercises or for operations under the command of the Commander Submarines Mediterranean. Additional dockyard time also can not be granted for reconditioning of this boat."

V. The threatening of the south-Ukrainian coast, especially of Odessa confronts the sea transportation at the Black Sea with a new situation.

Up to 51% of the tonnage consists of small vessels among them towed barges which for the most of time can only be used near the coast but not or even seldom in longer good weather periods across open sea routes. The share of the small vessels at the transport execution comes to approximately one third. In event of capturing Odessa the supply to Crimea would be reduced from 45.000 to about 30000 tons without taking into consideration probable losses.

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Additional demands upon the tonnage of sea transportation Danube-Transnistria owing to the breakdown of land communications in the South Ukraine would not be able to be carried out in event that the Crimea-supply should be maintained with that restricted tonnage. The performances of transportation for Crimea evacuation too in event of capturing Odessa and therewith the breakdown of the small vessel tonnage would at least drop to 25%.

The Commander in Chief, Navy, plans to report to the Fuehrer orally on this question on 21 March.

Relevant telegram for information will be forwarded to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff. Draught 1 SKL 1b 833/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV a.

Situation 18 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group 13, at the 19th there were 44 planes detected on mission. Eleven British vessels in the rendez-vous area and one British merchantman and two Allied vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

According to Counter Intelligence report the following amount of shipping could be identified in the middle of March in Northern England and Scotland:

Aberdeen - 50.000
Dundee - 140.000
Belfast - 240.000
Clyde-Ports - 230.000
Firth of Forth - 270.000
Scapa Flow - 170.000 BRT

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According to this report the number of auxiliary aircraft carriers lying at Scapa Flow comes to eight ones too. Definitely was stated that no increasing number of landing craft was sighted.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept each in the area of Brest, Lorient and La Pallice. The Gironde River has to be closed from Pauillac to le Verdon owing to suspected ground mines.

Three incoming and one leaving Submarine were escorted.

Channel Area:

Mines were swept as follows: off Lezardrieux two, off St. Malo five. The battery "Salzwedel" reports the downing of one enemy fighter. One enemy fighter was shot down by the ship antiaircraft artillery of a dredger in Zeebrugge: During the night of 17 March the batteries Wissant and Gris Nez shelled located enemy targets without recognition of the effect.

At noon one French fishing smack was fired on from sea probably by artillery motor boat.

The convoy "CHARLOTTE" entered Cherbourg.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

The crew of a Danish fishing smack entering Esbjerg reported the sighting of three British minesweepers with minesweeping gear and destroyer cover about 100 miles west of Jutland within the German Declared Area. The Commanding Admiral Defences North checks this report as during the night of 9 March one of our own minesweeping groups was at sea in the Declared Area.

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2. Own Situation:

Owing to rough sea the convoy and minesweeping duties off the Dutch coast were curtailed. In doing minesweeping the mineexploding vessel "27" was seriously damaged. Both, two mines were swept north of Cuxhaven and north of Tershelling. Suspected minelaying was reported north of Borkum. Two harbor defense boats were attacked with gunfire by enemy planes without effect in the area of Ymuiden and Helder.

The convoy 1231 Hook-Elbe is carried out. Two convoys of 49,000 BRT were escorted in the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Twenty three planes were detected on missions over the northern North Sea and south-west of Iceland.

At 1230 and 1518 Invergordon transmitted the keyword "Rabbit." At 1635 one British vessel was located in AF 8160.

From 2329 to 0204 on 19 March the Russian wireless telegraphic post Lazar Huk (in AC 8816) was in communication with two or three boats.

At 0755 our own air reconnaissance sighted 170 miles north-west of Drontheim a small war vessel of about 400 BRT steering 180°. One FW "200" plane fired on this vessel. The fire was replied.

2. Own Situation:

At noon, one of our own patrol boats fired on enemy planes off Stadlandet.

The battle brief report of the air raid against one of our own convoys on 17 March see Radiogram 0240.

Following that our own patrol-vessels shot down three planes.

The Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff was compelled to refuse the demands of the Admiral Northern Waters concerning the disposition of fighter cover projected for Alten-Fiord. Owing to the known situation in the Reich defense which requires the most smooth concentrating of all forces, the Naval Staff informs the Group North/

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Fleet, the Naval Command Norway and the Admiral Northern Waters and the Commanding Admiral (Cruisers) with the advice that in the present embarrassing situation increased importance is due to the completion of all the other aerial defense precautions. A summary of the antiaircraft, smoke and net defense precautions already ordered was requested.

Thirty-five northbound and 27 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring as commonly known the Group-Commander of minesweepers and approximately 20 unknown war vessels were at sea in the Gulf of Finland.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 30 boats in the Baltic Sea, two mine-exploding vessels, 25 boats and four minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. In the northern outlet of the Sound and in the Kiel-Bay both one combined mine was swept. One Danish fishing smack struck a mine in the northern outlet of the Sound.

Convoys were carried out as planned.

The Submarine U "286" was towed in to Stettin. On the Submarine U "1013" the I. Watchkeeper, the Senior Engineer Officer and 24 men were rescued. Evidently the rest of the crew drowned in the bow torpedo compartment.

Of the naval forces projected for the Gulf of Finland AF "2," "5," "9" and "49" started to proceed from Libau to Tallinn. The AF "30" started the passage from Memel to Libau. The Commander of the 1st Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and six boats entered Tallinn.

The netlayer "1" laid 36 lengths of ground line.

During Narva-patrol the minesweeper M "7" scored a bomb-hit. The boat has been underslung. Owing to ice drift which began with the refreshing of the wind, 43 mine detonations were recognized in the new barrages Seeigel 1 B and 2 B.

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At 2300 on 17 March the minesweeper M "3111" sunk after collision with P "26."

Regarding the Army Situation the Admiral Baltic Countries reported a quiet day at the sector of Hungerburg.

On 17 March the expected large scale enemy attack at the Narva-Front was repulsed with full success. One local penetration was cleared and blocked.

V. Submarine Warfare:

1. Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring one Allied steamer was fired on by a submarine on the evening of 17 March in the waters off Colombo.

2. Own Situation:

The Radio-Monitoring repeatedly detected ASV-locations on our own U-boats which were revoked later on. This observation seems to infer that the Thetis operations have turned out well. For the rest no particular reports were submitted.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

During the day stronger penetrations were reported into the Belgium and northern French area. The airfield of Amy and one mask airfield were attacked. Numerous high-explosives were dropped near St. Pol.

Ten planes penetrated from the South into the coastal area of Marseille without attacking. On the evening and during the night of the 18 March six airfields in the Dutch area were attacked with minor success. Presumably numerous enemy flights were used for dropping agents in Western France. Ten planes attacked the factory of high explosives in Bergerac which was set afire and was destroyed.

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Reich Territory:

In the noon hours a medium sized attack was carried out on Munich by strong bomber formations and fighter cover. Besides Friedrichshaven and three airfields were attacked.

During the evening hours a very serious raid was carried out on Francfort/Main by several hundred bombers.

One formation penetrating into the Heligoland Bight presumably did minelaying.

Mediterranean Theater:

In the Italian Area on 17 March the enemy operated with 500 planes in the Front Area concentrating the forces on Cassino. More attacks were carried out by strong formations on trains and railroads in Central Italy. Serious damage was inflicted thereby.

In the Aegean area the common reconnaissance operations were observed. On 18 March our own reconnaissance sighted a convoy of 25 steamers north-east of Mostaganem. In the afternoon one cruiser and two steamers were sailing between Bonifacio-Straits and Anzio heading east.

The following convoys were reported: north of Marsa Matruk one east-bound convoy of three transports, 22 freighters, eight destroyers and escort vessels, north of Derna one westbound convoy of 24 steamers and between Bengasi and Malta one group of six transports, three freighters and three destroyers heading South-West.

Eastern Area:

On 17 March 618 enemy and 1083 own missions were counted at the eastern front. With seven own losses 24 planes were shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1930 on 17 March one cruiser of the "TROMP"-class one Monitor, four transports thereof one in the dock; 13 tankers, 42 freighters and

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eight destroyers, 18 corvettes, twelve Agate-boats, 18 tugs one cable ship and three oil lighters were lying in Gibraltar. In the area of Oran at forenoon our own air reconnaissance sighted one convoy of seven transports and 20 freighters with seven escort vessels with course 30° and seven transports, five destroyers on 150° and one transport and two destroyers steering 90°.

The convoy coming from the Atlantic on 17 March did not enter Gibraltar but passed by to the East.

According to an Intelligence report which is following up to an indiscretion of a higher ranking consulate official in Barcelona done in the beginning of March, an Allied attack is to be carried out from Oran on the Balearic-Islands for which purpose the troops are concentrated in Algiers and Mers el Kebir. Among these troops there are to exist 15.000 Red-Spaniards. The whole Army which is cyphered to 150.000 men is commanded by the USA-General Patton. The Mediterranean Fleet is to be reinforced by USA-vessels and USA Admiral is to be subordinated to Seymour.

Evidently the occupation of the Balearic-Islands would only be valued as part of a greater operation.

Own Situation:

Four steamers with 200 BRT were escorted off the Southern Coast. The steamer "SAUMUR" entered Sete coming from Port Vendres.

The Chief of Maritime Branch achieved discussions with all concerning officials in Spain and Southern France on the subject of Eastern Spain Shipping and reports as results:

1. The fruit-shipping with German ships may be suspended for the required quantities can be transported otherwise.

2. In the shipments of ores from Sagunt 10.000 tons monthly or even more must at least be carried off. Thereoff 8.000 tons could be shipped with Spanish ships from Barcelona in order to be fetched from there by German ships. The route from the pit to Hendaye will be prepared but, will not be finished until October. Therefore German ships for fetching the minimum of 2000 tons monthly from Sagunt are required. Execution will be co-ordinated with the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping.

The Group West reports, that its request raised at the 3rd Air Force for strengthening the fighter cover and anti-aircraft protection in the

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area of Toulon was refused with regard on the present situation of available forces.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

At 1846 our own air reconnaissance sighted a convoy of 25 merchantmen with two destroyers steering 70° 30 miles north-east of Arzea.

In the morning busy shipping was observed off the beachhead. According to sighting report of the army one squadron of warships consisting of one heavy cruiser, three light cruisers and three destroyers stood for ten miles south of Anzio and shelled the coast. Over-estimation of types may be possible.

Second phase interpretation of nightly photograph of Naples on 11 March revealed important stronger amount of merchant shipping than the rough interpretation. In total in port and on the roads were identified two light cruisers, two destroyers, two escort vessels, four small war vessels, two transports with altogether 16,800 BRT and 88 freighters with altogether 551,000 BRT.

Own Situation:

In the PT-boat attack on the naval ferry-barges-convoy during the night of 16 March off Nervi one blind of American origin from the production year 1915 was safeguarded.

At 0342 on 18 March one of our own harbor defense boats was engaged with a small enemy PT-boat presumably an agents vessel west of Spezia.

The operation of the Italian MAS-boat during the night of 17 March off the beachhead of Nettunia did not bring up any sightings. On her passage to the operational area the boat met two thought to be British PT-boats without coming into contact with them.

Strong aerial survey of the western and eastern ports as well the supply routes is lasting on. In the attack on the afternoon of 17 March one tug was set afire off Carrava, another was chased and run aground. The last shipyard being ready for operations was destroyed in Viareggio. In the new raid on Leghorn on the afternoon of 18 March one steamer and one tanker-barge was sunk and one freight-barge was seriously damaged. Eighteen enemy fighters attacked one

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coastal battery east of Venice without doing any harm. The demolition of railroads and bridges raises the importance of sea-transportation. The harbor of Talamone, which was seriously damaged by air raid on 13 March will be ready again for operation with the date of 18 March. The patrol and escort-duties were carried out as planned.

During the night of 17 March the mining operation NE of Pesaro was carried out as planned. On the return passage one enemy PT-boat was sighted off Rimini. The minesweeping on our own barrage off Elba was continued without result.

In CK 7441 the submarine U "453" obtained a hit both on a freighter of 8.000 BRT and on two freighters of 5.000 BRT each.

3. Area of the Naval Group Command South:

a. Adriatic:

On the morning of 17 March 62 enemy fighter bombers attacked a battery and berths in Zara. One harbor defense boat was sunk.

During the attack of four Spitfire planes on a harbor defense boat in the Bojena-mouth, the boat was set afire and sustained casualties.

During the night of 17 March the PT-boats S "36" and S "61" operated in the area of the central Dalmatian Islands. They sunk a fast motor fishing smack north of Lagosta at 2218 on 17 March.

At 2025 the torpedoboat TA "36" sunk after being hit by mine and torpedo 15 miles SSW of Fiume. The boat put out from Trieste with torpedoboat TA "21," one submarine chaser and one minelayer for mine-laying operation. Casualties were not yet reported.

On inquiry of the Naval Staff the Naval Shore Commander Dalmatia reports details of the sinking of the coastal motor sailing ship "RONDINELLA" during the night of 10 March, which was captured and sunk by two British PT-boats off Corcula. According to statement of the escaped officer belonging to the regiment 750 one PT-boat equipped with a gun came alongside, transhipped the crew and some of the German soldiers being on board and went off by saying that the rest of the German soldiers would be fetched later on. After shoving off, however, the "RONDINELLA" was sunk by gunfire with the furloughers on board. Presumably, thereby were killed in action one officer and 30 - 35 men. The crew and about 20 German soldiers were taken prisoner.

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In case this statement would prove correct it would be concerned an exorbitant rupture of international law. The attitude of the British would be considered to be pure murder. Careful investigations are introduced for further pursuance if need be.

For a new time the authorized Infantry Division reports in connection with this incident, that the supply of the isles on sea routes will get impossible in case that the Navy does not clean up the sea routes immediately by sufficient reconnaissance and patrol between the mainland and the isles.

b. Aegean:

One ground mine was swept off Syra. The convoy "AGATHE" entered Piraeus.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance three small vessels and two ferry barges were lying in Skadovsk on 17 March. The reconnaissance on 18 March gave no results.

Own Situation:

During the air raid on Feodosiya on the afternoon of 17 March our own fighter shot down twelve planes and antiaircraft artillery another four ones.

The air raid on Otshakov on the afternoon of 17 March carried out by eleven enemy planes did not inflict any damage.

Owing to bad weather conditions the patrol line in Kerch-Straits was not occupied during the night of 17 March. At 2110 the patrol line reported gunfire by enemy battery at Kossa Tusla. The patrol position in the Dnjpr-Liman was occupied by three naval ferry barges.

In carrying out the towed convoy during the night of 16 March the navigation between Nicolaev-Odessa was suspended.

The Crimea convoys were carried out as planned.

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After shipyards repair three PT-boats will transfer from Constanța to Ivanbaba.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

The Naval Attaché Tokyo reports, that presumably Japanese submarine chasers sunk an enemy submarine at 0423 North 9956 East on 16 February. Presumably this might be the enemy boat which sunk the "U I T 23."

Enemy submarines are very busy in the Strait of Malacca. Now the Japanese defense is strengthened. Since 16 February presumably two more enemy submarines were battled on.

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Items of Political Importance:

Rumors appeared in the British Press promising a new meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt. The commentators suggested that Stalin's arbitrary policy would require new discussions between the Anglo-Saxons.

Special Items:

I. Concerning Hungary:

On the occasion of his visit to the Fuehrer's Headquarters the Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff orally informed the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff that the transfer of German troops to Hungary was projected in order to back up a new Hungarian Government which for the next time shall steer a closer course towards our plans. It will be easily understood that this precaution will rise reactions to Romania. In event that it would be necessary to disarm or partially disarm respectively the Hungarian Armed Forces, the Naval Staff received the instruction to form a special purpose command in Linz for assumption of the Danube Flotilla. Moreover the Naval Staff is sending a Liaison Officer to the Work Staff Foertsch for special duty in Vienna (I opa 1st Lieutenant Jaeger) who will previously inform the Commanding General, Armed Forces South East in Belgrade on the precautions of the Navy.

On 17 March the 1st Lieutenant Jaeger arrived at Belgrade. The Commanding General Armed Forces South-East has been requested to invite the Chief of Staff of the Group South for personal information of the Group to Belgrade.

On 17 March the Chief of Staff of the Group South was informed that nothing has to be arranged at his part.

The special service command 111 in strength of 150 men under the command of 1st Lieutenant Feist was sent off to Linz. The command was not informed on the tasks. The order will follow directly by the Operations Div./Naval Staff.

On 18 March the Group South was informed about this by Radiogram.

At 0020 on 19 March the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy reports:

"After longer negotiations with the Reichsregent Horthy an agreement was reached on discussion with the Fuehrer today. The German demands

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were accepted. Complete new formation of the Hungarian Government is projected. The Hungarian proclamation is expected on the afternoon of 19 March.

German troops will march in the morning of 19 March as planned. The Hungarian Armed Forces will not be disarmed and previously remain in its barracks. No occupation of the town of Budapest, there, only guard of honour for the Reichregent. Occupation in the area of Budapest and in some important industrial areas and traffic centers is planned by the German Armed Forces.

No big staging publication projected."

The marching in was completed in the course of the day as planned. The special Command 111 will not but operate on request of the Commanding General, Armed Forces South-East and for the next time according to directives of the Naval Staff.

Relevant information of the Group South and of the Quartermaster Division which is harmonized with the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy runs as follows:

"Resulting the yesterdays discussions with the Hungarian Reich-Regent, today the transfer of German troops to Hungary took place in order to back up the Government for the future which will steer closer course to our plans. Up to now all went on as planned. The special Command which was put at disposal by the Navy in Linz for this purpose will only but operate on request of the Commanding General, Armed Forces South-East at first according to directives of the Naval Staff."

The Honved River Guard disposes of six patrol boats, three motor boats, two training-boats, four steamers suitable as transport and escorts vessels, altogether 15 vessels with in total 1891 tons. Port of destination Budapest. Personnel strength 96 officers and 1524 rank and files. River barrage vessels are in Neusatz, Baja and Maria Theresianopol.

II. Concerning the Crimea Question:

The Naval Liaison Officer to the General Staff of the Army forwarded a note of an oral report which was delivered on 15 March by the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff. Copy as per 1 SKL 873/44 Chefs. GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV a.

At the Naval Staff the same circle of thoughts (Copy of summary on Crimea situation was written on 10 March by the Operations Div./Naval Staff and was also put down in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.) resulted the examination of supply and evacuation possibilities and then to submit them to the Commander in Chief, Navy as records for his report

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to the Fuehrer. On this occasion on 17 March the Commander in Chief, Navy ordered on to inform the Armed Forces High Command immediately of these ranges of thoughts by telegram in order that in no case irreparable time would be wasted up till the report to the Fuehrer which was postponed to 21 March. Adequate Radiogram see War Diary 18 March especially Cypher V.

III. From wireless telegraphic traffic on 17 March between the Admiral Black Sea op and the Commanding Admiral the planning of mine-laying in Dnieper-Liman was understood. The small number of mines available constrains to block on the narrowest spot.

Execution will but be carried out when the enemy will take in possession the Western banks of Bug-River.

Judgment of the Naval Staff is not required.

IV. Concerning the escort of "KIEFER" the Group West receives the following directive:

"The escort of the Japanese submarine "KIEFER" by destroyers and torpedo boats did not turn out well. The striking character of such an escort attracts the enemy air force in a stronger manner and thus attains the contrary of the desired goal.

But the value of such a boat and the political effect of her secure escort are so important that particular precautions have to be made. The Group West is instructed to examine and to send in proposals, lining out with which precautions an increased safeguarding could be reached in contrary to normal Submarine escort, without attracting the enemy air force by the striking character in particular manner."

V. Concerning "Tanne":

The Naval Staff confirms the General Staff of the army operational department Liaison Officer of the Navy with copy to Naval Command East:

1. that the required crews for batteries will be disposed at first by the Army Group North and relieved later on by naval crews.
2. As the required naval Artillery Detachments have to be taken from another area and yet it cannot be foreseen from which area the

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withdrawal of forces would be bearable in the present situation, the disposal will take place in the case of need by command ruling.

VI. The Swiss information center ostensibly has found out the following informations of members of the USA committee of Europe to the State Department in Washington:

"During the last weeks hopes of the members of the British War Cabinet for the end of war soon being at hand were essentially restrained during the last weeks by the experiences made in the Italian campaign and in the resumption of the German air raids. The opening of the Second Front seems to be set aside for incalculable times and dare not take place before further increasing of the air raids against Germany. British authorities do not expect German collapse by internal exhaustion. Together with constantly more noticeable enforcement of supporting persons in the British Cabinet who support milder conditions of peace goes the prospects of continuation of war. Since some time ago it is no more secret in informed circles in London that Washington wishes to convince the British Government that at least one should try to come in touch with Hitler-Germany in any way. There may be added that recently in military and economical circles the tendency revealed, to warn against depreciation of the Far-East warfare. One is somewhat disturbed on the development in the United States too especially by the conflict between the congress and Roosevelt which recently came to a critical point and the extension of which is believed of being imminent to foreign policy by home circles. There must be counted on new attacks of the opposition against the land and lease support.

VII. The survey of enemy informations detected by wireless decyphering and radio monitoring from 6 - 12 March 1944 are included in the observation-report No. 11/44.

Situation 19 March 1944:

I. War in Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

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II. Situation in the West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group there were twelve at the 19th Group there were 50 planes detected on missions. Seven Allied vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

From reliable sources the Intelligence reports:

The third large assembly of ships consisting of 550 - 600 000 BRT is distributed in ports of the Irish Sea. The first assembly formerly reported has further advanced to the South and lies now nearly altogether in the Bristol Channel, the second one in Northwest England and Scotland. The invasion tonnage of the first assembly is lying with about 200 000 BRT in Carmarthen Bay and with 90.000 BRT in St. Brides. In Newport there are 55 and in Bristol 45 - 50 LCT's.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Mines were swept as follows: in the area of Bayonne two in the area of St. Nazaire and Gironde one, in the area of Royan three.

The convoy of the steamer "BROMBERG" transferred from Ile de Croix to Brest. Proceeding to St. Morlaix is projected for the night of 19 March. Four torpedo boats and two destroyers are to form the flank guard.

One incoming Submarine was escorted.

Channel Area:

During the night of 18 March the convoy "CHARLOTTE" was carried out from Cherbourg to Le Havre.

In case of favorable weather, proceeding is planned during the night of 19 March from Le Havre to Dieppe and Boulogne.

The following mines were swept: in the area of St. Malo one, off Nieuport one, off Gravelines two, west of Dunkerque 13, east of Dunkerque two.

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III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

At 0658 and 0808 the Commander of boats unit was located in a distance of about 25 miles west or 35 miles respectively north of Zeebrugge.

2. Own Situation:

In doing minesweeping the mine exploding vessel "27" was seriously damaged in AN 9555. The mine exploding vessel "163" struck a mine north-west of Cuxhaven and sank after many unsuccessful attempts of towing her off of the Elbe "1" light ship.

Two mines were swept off Borkum and eight mines off Wangeroog. Further successes in minesweeping were reported off Hook of Holland and Ameland.

In proceeding from Weser to Elbe the Finnish steamer "WIRPI" (1 227 BRT) was seriously damaged by mine ten miles northwest of Cuxhaven and was set aground. The fairway of the Elbe-River is partially blocked owing to suspected minelaying.

The convoy 1233 Hook-Elbe was postponed to 24 hours. Two convoys of 28500 BRT were escorted in the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group Command 20 planes were detected on missions.

According to Radio Monitoring PT-boats were at sea in the Radio area of Lazar Huk. At 1935 one British vessel was located in 265° from Hammerfest. At 1535 one British Command post informed the Scapa Forces of the entering of one midget Submarine for the morning of 20 March. At 0814 our own air reconnaissance sighted three steamers and eight coastal vessels off Jekonga and at 0755 one PT-boat too west of the Foldafiord.

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2. Own Situation:

Busy gunfire was reported from the area of Petsamo on the afternoon of 17 March. Two guns of the Petsamo-battery received a direct hit and sustained casualties. On 18 March the penetration of enemy planes into the area of Kirkenes, Vardoe and Banak was very small.

Twenty-four northbound and 28 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

On 18 March at about 1600 one submarine was sighted in Narva mouth about three or four miles off the coast by members of the army. After having been fired on the boat submerged and emerged after about 15 minutes and came out of sight. The Admiral Baltic Countries supposes misobservation, presumably mistake with ice shelf.

According to Radio Monitoring the war vessel PT-boat S "19" and six unknown vessels were at sea in the Gulf of Finland.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 21 and in the Baltic Sea 14 boats were engaged in Mine sweeping. Both one mine was swept in the southern outlet of the Sound and the outlet of Kiel Bay.

No special incidents were reported in convoy duties.

The AR "2," "5," "9," "49" and "30" transfer from Libau to Tallinn AF "31" from Gotenhafen to Memel.

The netlayers "1" and "4" continued their task. One net was accomplished up to 59419 North. The groundline is lying uptil 5948 North.

Five boats of the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla were lying on aircraft reporting position off Tallinn during the night. Six boats formed the antiaircraft protection for the net-barrage squadron.

At 1700 the destroyer Z "35" anchored at Paldiski roads. Z "25" transferred from Tallinn to Paldiski. In order to execute repair work for torpedo firing exercises the boat was detached to Gotenhafen and is lying there in twelve hours readiness.

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The minesweeper M "7" which was attacked by about 30 aircraft on 18 March was towed in to Tallinn. Three men were killed in action, nine were wounded. Two aircraft were shot down.

Against our naval forces the enemy carried out many missions. The mine sweeper M "3122" was damaged by bomb hit in Kunda-Bay and was set aground. One enemy plane was shot down by antiaircraft artillery.

Regarding the mainland situation the Admiral Baltic Countries reports, that all was quiet on the Narva-Front up to Gorodenka. In the western sack several strong enemy attacks were repulsed, local penetration was cleared. In the eastern sack hard fighting took place. The main line of defence remained in our own hand. In the Narva bridgehead enemy attacks near Webskuela and west of Lilienbach were repulsed. In the bridgehead and over Narva town strong enemy air forces were operating.

The Naval Command East is planning to lay coastal mines type A bar-rages at the coast of Estonia for protection against Russian landing operation and has begun the planning in coordination with the army.

For the first planning 6 - 8000 coastal mines type A are required.

The Naval Staff principally agreed with this and will arrange further instructions concerning the delivery. The Naval Command East soon is to report the total number of coastal mines type A because this new requirement will increase the present planning of coastal mines type A production.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

Presumably the same steamer which was detected on 18 March reported regarding the Radio Monitoring to be torpedoed in the area of Colombo and then being persecuted by Submarine.

2. Own Situation:

Owing to defense the Submarine U "218" did not carry out the mine-laying task off Trinidad and tries for the next time to accomplish the task Santa Lucia in order to set about doing the Trinidad task for a new time.

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The submarine U "311" shot a Fat-torpedo* on a steamer with three destroyers and is thinking to have sunk the steamer in AL 9775.

No other reports of any importance submitted.

VI. Aerial Warfare

In the afternoon eight groups of many hundred bombers and two groups of fighters penetrated into the area of Belgium northern France and carried out a number of raids against railroads, construction sites, airfields and villages. In the morning there ten enemy penetrations and in the afternoon 20 enemy missions were reported without attacks. During the night of 19 March minor groups penetrated into Belgium and Western France without carrying out attacks. Obviously one group of 30 planes was sent out for minelaying in the Gironde area.

131 of our own bombers operated against Hull. Thereoff 103 reached the target nine planes were lost.

Reich Territory:

In noon several 100 bombers and fighters coming from the South penetrated into the Reich and attacked Graz and Klagenfurt in two groups. In Klagenfurt the airfield repair shop was seriously damaged. Fifteen planes were partially consumed by fire and partially damaged. Two barracks were hit in Graz the airfield was not hurt. Further details see situation of the day.

During the night of 19 March the enemy carried out harassing missions by isolated planes in the Reich territory. Isolated dropping of bombs was reported.

Mediterranean Theater.

On 18 March the enemy attacked with strong groups under fighter cover airfields in North Italy without inflicting particular damage. Minor groups were sent out to attack Leghorn, the marshalling yards [yards] of Orvieto and Folingo and the town area of Rome.

Forty-six of our own bombers attacked from 1850 - 1925 an enemy convoy in the area west of Bougie with air torpedoes and FK.* 34 of the planes arrived at the target. Three own planes were lost. Three steamers of altogether 22000 BRT were hit.

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Eastern Area.

On 18 March 1307 own and 425 enemy missions were counted on the Eastern Front. Three own and five enemy planes were lost.

The 4th Air Force reconnoitred the Kerch straits by photograph. Altogether 141 of our own planes were sent out for reconnaissance at sea, submarine chasing and convoy escorts. On 18 March our own planes annihilated six boats and obtained direct hits on boats assemblies off the Pristan-Tsherrjum. During the night of 18 March 17 of our own planes were sent out to attack among other Ilitsh with bombs.

No particular reports from the 5th Air Force.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group Command West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0700 one of our own planes sighted one convoy of 15 ships in CH 8376 (off Algier). Course was not reported. Owing to Radio Monitoring one England-Mediterranean bound convoy was sailing in the area of Cape Tenes at 0400. Following further reports of the air reconnaissance one convoy of 26 steamers was steering easterly course at 1000 in CH 9447. At 2204 Algiers reported attack on convoy by our own planes and the report of starting of the British fighter cover.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

Regarding the photographic reconnaissance of Algiers in the afternoon the following amount of ships was lying in port and on the roads: two cruisers, one auxiliary cruiser three escort vessels, two destroyers, five transports, 32 freighters, three tankers, one LSJ, 14 big and about 50 small landing craft.

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The photographs of the ports of Oran and Algiers resulted that no essential preparation for landing operations could be recovered in these main bases of the Western Mediterranean. Therefore the intelligence report of large landing operations in the Western Mediterranean were doubtful.

According to the identifications of the air reconnaissance the main concentration of the enemy assembly remained now as before in the central Mediterranean.

During the night of 18 March about twelve or 17 ships in the area of the beachhead and at about midnight a convoy of about 15-20 ships coming from Naples and steering west, presumably new supply were observed. In the morning one transport, two steamers and eight large landing craft and 14 patrol vessels were only lying in the area of the beachhead. According to identifications made by photographs there 26 landing craft were lying in Tobruk.

Own Situation:

During the night of the 18 March two Italian assault boats operated off the beachhead. One boat sustained motor damage on her passage to the target. Since midnight the contact with both the boats was interrupted.

Owing to collision of one boat with one passing patrol boat, motor minesweepers suspended the transfer passage for minelaying operation. On their way back the boats were engaged with two enemy PT-boats northwest of Viareggio without sustaining any damages or breakdowns. On her further proceeding after the collision the patrol boat presumably was torpedoed by enemy PT-boat. Further report did not yet come in.

The Torpedoboat TA "20" carried out her minelaying task, as planned and returned to Venice.

The former Italian Monitor was towed from Genoa to Savona in order to be used as floating battery.

At 0342 one of our own convoys was attacked in low level flight east of Longnoe without effect.

On 18 March 7655 tons in seven escorted and five self-protected convoys were transported at the Italian West Coast.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

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a. Adriatic:

The main part of the crew of Torpedoboat TA "36" was rescued. Owing to suspected mines the operation was suspended. After having completed their minesweeping in the area of the isles the motor minesweeper R "188," R "180" and "191" were raided with gunfire by six enemy planes on the morning of 18 March off Dubrovnik without resulting any effect. During the night of 18 March the boats transferred to Cattaro and are to proceed during the night of 20 March.

On the morning of 19 March one stronger enemy commando raid supported by air raids has taken place against Solta. The fate of the occupation force in strength of one company is still unknown.

In the early hours of the morning one own operation was started against the isle of Rab.

The landing was completed. The operation accomplished at noon. Details are still lacking.

b. Aegean.

At about 2000 on 17 March two motor sailing ships laden with grain were captured by Greek partisans at Kythera and went off in direction to the Peloponesus.

Five mines were swept by mine sweeping planes in Suda Bay.

Between 0045-0130 one convoy consisting of one naval ferry barge, three Siebel ferries and one tug was attacked by enemy destroyers and PT-boats southwest of Pyrgos at the western side of the Peloponesus. The Siebel ferries were sunk, the naval ferry barge was seriously damaged and is now drifting.

At 0704 the convoy "GERTRUD" was attacked by submarine with four torpedo misfires off Cape Maleas.

2. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Photographic reconnaissance resulted:

in Sinaja four landing craft and two other boats

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in Kossa Tusla one coastal vessel, three pontoons, four tugs, 40 boats. Besides busy ferry-traffic was observed.

in Jenikale nine landing craft, three tugs, five other boats.

in Illitsh three gun boats, ten boats.

Own Situation:

No particular events were reported from the patrol line of the Dnepr - Liman. During the night of 18 March the patrol line in Kerch straits was shelled by 17 cm battery from Kossa Tusla with about 45 salvoes but did not obtain any hit. After returning to home base, the enemy battery shelled the port of Kamysh Burun, there also without effect.

During the morning and afternoon the towed convoy Odessa-Sevastopol was attacked by enemy planes with gunfire and bombs without effect.

In the morning the naval ferry barge transport Odessa - Ak Metschet was attacked six times by altogether 49 planes. Presumably six attacking planes were shot down by ship Flak and fighter cover. The 30 000 ton floating dock in Nicolaev has been blown up. Besides three floating cranes, the southern mole, buildings on the southern mole and the construction site South were destroyed.

On 19 March the Crimea has been supplied with 8926 tons, 549 soldiers and 162 horses.

The Admiral Black Sea ordered that in event of good weather conditions the naval ferry barges operating in transportation Odessa - Crimea have to be loaded with troops up to maximum capacity and to take on board sufficient rescue material.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Caroline Islands.

The various Japanese bases on the Caroline Islands, especially Truk are attacked by the American Air Force in irregular intervals. According to American report there was no fighter defense but very effective ground antiaircraft defense.

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Curile Islands.

On 16 and 17 March the northern Curile Islands were raided for a new time.

Admiralty-Islands.

American Forces landed on the Isle of Manus and captured an important air field.

Bougainville.

According to Reuter information the Japanese offensive operation which began on 8 March against the American beachhead and which took the enemy two of three air fields now is broken down in meantime. No Japanese reports on the continuation of the offensive operation were submitted in meantime.

Java-Sea.

On 17 March American heavy bombers attacked the Japanese base Sourabaya at Java and the air field Den Pazar at Bali-Island.

Burma.

The Headquarter of the Allied Forces in New-Delhi reports with special report that in the back of the Japanese Front in the area of the Chin-mountains in Burma airborne troops occupied terrain and built an air field. In covering this operation the Japanese airfields lying in the vicinity were held down by current raids. The landing and the construction of the airfield happened to be completed without disturbance of the enemy.

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Items of Political Importance

No special reports submitted.

Conference on the situation with Chief of Staff of the Naval War Staff.

I. Army Situation:

The enemy beachheads north of Nicopol had been compressed. Hard fighting is taking place in the area of the Army Group South. The enemy formed larger bridgeheads across the Dnjestr River in the area of Jampol. Hard fighting is taking place in the area of Kovel. There, own local attacks are going on.

The losses of equipment at the 6th Army in the retreat to the Bug River turned out to be not as serious as originally expected according to information of the Naval Liaison Officer at the General Staff of the Army. According to the same information the advance of divisions which are getting free from the withdrawal of the 8th Army for counterattacks on the left wing between Bug and Dnestr was delayed by muddy roads and obstructed transports. Approximately two Russian armored armies are standing in the gap at both sides of Jampol.

The fighting at Mogilew - Podolski is particularly important because there the second accommodated passage across the Dnestr River is coming into consideration.

The enemy attacks on the left wing of the 2nd Army are valued as preparation for the thrust into the deep flank of this army.

Generally, nothing happened in the area of the Central Army Group. At the Army Group North too, all was comparatively quiet after the pleasing defense results of the last days. At Narva the enemy did not earn the results of his heavy efforts.

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval War Staff gave information on the report of the Naval Attache Helsinki. Regarding to that the Foreign Minister informed the ambassador that informations have come in, saying that Moscow eventually would be disposed to negotiations. In connection with utterances of the Swedish Press this information may presume that the Russians may offer modification to the Finns in a similar unofficial manner as it took place in the mission of Paasekivi which under certain conditions could create a new situation. According to Finnish utterances it would be desirable of the Press to postpone the withdrawal to the borders of 1940 until

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negotiations would be concluded, to search for otherwise compensation for Hangö, to change the confinement of the German troops in isolation and to exclude the Esthonians and Ingrians, who fled to Finland from repatriation.

III. The Quartermaster General reports of difficulties which arose between the Admiral Adriatic and the Commanding General Armed Forces in Istria, General Kübler. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff orders to inform the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff by the Naval Liaison on the opinion of the Naval Staff with telegram.

Special Items

I. As to information of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff/Navy things are developing as planned in Hungary at our four own fighting groups. The Fieldmarshal von Weichs and the Major General Foertsch arrived at Budapest. The population is peaceful, the attitude of the Hungarian Armed Forces partially is very obliging. Just as expected the formation of a new government is going to meet difficulties. The SS-leader Veesemeier was appointed commissioner of the Reich.

The Chief of the Armed Forces High Command issued a directive concerning the transit to Hungary. Up to the moment the situation should be clear all transit traffic of headquarters and commissions of military and civil staffs should not be allowed. The borders to Hungary are blocked. Copy of the draught 1 SKL 10771/44 Geheim in War Diary Part B, Volume V.

II. In the Fuehrer's Headquarters the Fuehrer delivered an address to the Commanding Generals of the West Area and the Fortress Commanders which was to arrange a general survey on the situation and was to be of service for coordination to future defense struggles in West Area.

III. The Shipping and Transport Branch doubted the embarkation figures of the Black Sea Tonnage which were transmitted by the Admiral Black Sea in December and which were used as records for planning. Most of all, the billeting of the steamers "ARDEAL" with 7000 and "ALBA-JULIA" with 7500 men was said to be too high. The Group South gets the instruction to check these numbers and confirm them immediately.

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IV. Concerning the operation "Tanne".

1. The Armed Forces High Command/Operation Staff instructed the 416th Infantry Division to examine the partial change to motorisation by requisition of motor cars and bicycles in mobilization style and to report the result to the Armed Forces High Command.

The Naval Command East relevant was informed by the Naval Staff.

2. The Naval Command East reports, that the Commander of the 416th Infantry Division applies for 170 naval gunners for reconnaissance duties and provisional manning of the coastal batteries in the first wave. Transportation facilities only are available on the steamer "URUNDI." According to the opinion of the Naval Command East the personnel must be made available in Norway and has to be ready for shipment in Danzig on D-Day-3.

According to the Operation Division's viewpoint parts of the battery-crews of Scheveningen North may only come in question for this disposition. The Quartermaster General will settle further arrangements.

V. The Quartermaster Division directs that one may desist from the execution of changes in organization of the command of coasts and coastal forwarded areas which was transmitted on 11 February 1944 in form of a study in so far as it concerns the West Area and partially the area of the Naval Command North. Concerning these areas the following is ordered:

The Group West and the Naval Command North secure the joint command of the coasts and coastal forwarded areas in event of threatening landing operation ordered by the Naval Staff and report the precautions ordered by them for this case up to 1 April 44 to the High Command Navy under particular consideration of communications and location service and the emergency headquarters projected for case of need. At the same time the regulation set up for the time of preparation is to be made thus ascertaining the experiences with this organization of command.

VI. Following the report of the Group West and the Naval Command East the present stand of the coastal mine type A - actions will be as follows:

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I. Naval Command North.

1. Danish West Coast.

The only place of production Esbjerg will supply 150 pieces daily from 8 March. The laying of the coastal mines A will be made in the following succession:

- a. Trials barrage north of Blaavandshuk
- b. off Skallingen and Fanoe (on both sides of Esbjerg)
- c. off Kunda Dyb (south of Fanoe)
- d. off Jubre Dyb (north of Roem)
- e. north of Blaavandshuk

2. Heligoland Bight

Planning not yet concluded.

3. Netherlands - West coast.

On 14 March 71 casting moulds were sent off from the home area. Production will start three days after arriving at:

- a. Den Helder with 15
- b. Ymuiden with 15
- c. Hook of Holland with 15
- d. Hellewoitsluis (10 miles south of Hook v. Holland)
with eleven
- e. Vlissingen with 15 daily.

The minelaying will begin after start of the production and enclosure of the total planning which just arrived at the Naval Command North; this will depend on the tonnage of the vessels available, the weather, tides, local conditions of transportation.

Succession of planting:

- a. Flandern coast east of Zeebrugge
- b. western and northern coast of Walcheren Island

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- c. western coast of Shouven Island
- d. western coast of Goerree Island
- e. western coast of Been
- f. coast from Hook'of Holland to Den Helder.

II. The Group West reports:

Since arrival of the information from the successful results of the snag-line trials (17 March) the execution of the coastal mine type A-production was completely changed. Now the intention is, to lay all the coastal mines type A mostly from sea-side. Therefore, the utilization of mine carriers of greater capacity would be possible and the transfer of production places from the open coast to ports would be necessary.

4. Channel Coast.

Production takes place at the following places:

- a. Dieppe from 4 April with 17, from 10 April with 60
- b. Le Havre from 30 April with 60 daily
- c. Boulogne after delivery of further casting moulds.

The coastal mines type A should be planted equipped with the new snag-line in order to bridge the rise and fall of the tide. The snag-line is smooth, without noticeable thickening. On trials with a German landing craft six hits were obtained in seven runs.

The minelaying in Channel Area will come to a regular minelaying operation as it is restricted to the period of new-moon and suitable weather conditions. Beginning with the period of new moon in April.

Mine carriers: Four minesweepers type 35 for each operation 200 coastal mines type A, later on additional motor minesweeper operations are planned. Owing to lack of vessels further speeding up is impossible. Barrages in two rows and with 25 m spaces from mine to mine.

5. Atlantic Coast:

Production takes place at the following places:

- a. Brest from 1 April with 20

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- b. Le Verdon from 10 April with 60
- c. Bayonne from 10 April with 33 from 20 April with 60 daily.

Instead of projected Blitz barrages (ground mines) the planting of mines with snag lines is planned from 15 April with four minesweepers Type 35 and 200 mines for each operation. In the beginning of May the minelaying will start in Dounarneney-Bay [possibly Douarnenez] south of Brest with five naval landing craft instead of Blitz barrages which were planned there.

The withdrawal of eight modern minesweepers will be necessary during the time of this operation. Restriction in Submarine escorts, steamer escorts and minesweeping will be necessary.

6. French South Coast:

Production takes place at the following places:

- a. Sète from 25 April with 60 daily
 - b. Port Ventres)
 - c. Port de Bouc)
-) after delivery of further casting moulds.

Beginning of minelaying immediately after production by three or four naval ferry barges with 120-160 coastal mines type A per day.

III. Naval Command East.

7. Gulf of Finland, Esthonian coast:

8000 coastal mines type A were applied for coastal protection by the Naval Command East. Preparation is going on.

The Operations Staff Navy will be informed according to the fact in charge of the Commander in Chief, Navy.

VII. On 17 March the German Naval Command Italy was advised by the Commanding General Armed Forces South West to the fact of six time destruction of railroad bridges and roads between Ancona and Benedetto. Repair will only be possible with large amount of work in about four weeks. Therefore urgent increasing of sea transportation from Ancona to Benedetto was requested. The German Naval Command Italy reports that under present conditions increasing only will be

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reached with materials now available in case that naval landing craft could be brought into action, which may also navigate in bad weather and which may have larger capacity and defense power. The German Naval Command Italy repeats its apply for allocation of naval landing craft which are coming from the current program of new construction.

Under these present circumstances the Naval Staff considers this apply a legitimate one. After checking the requirement of all other commands the Naval Staff decided to assign six vessels of the first naval landing craft which were to be transferred, to the German Naval Command Italy.

VIII. Concerning the instruction of the Japanese on the Zaunkoenig* and Fatalist and the non-using of Radar location sets (compare with War Diary 12 March especially cypher III) the Operations Div/Naval Staff proposes the following information to the Japanese saying that some of the torpedoes of the Zaunkoenig* system are in operation at the front, but the trial-runs of them are not yet concluded. The Naval Attaché would have to harmonize this version with the other commands involved. In regard to the Radar location set the following answer is proposed on suggestion of the Chief of Naval Communications:

"Multiplied informations of Japanese representatives has been made. The Radar location set is highly important however only without radiation. Therefore, Metox receiving set prohibited. Main concentration put on cm-waves, in 3-4 cm and 9-12 cm range. There, crystal receiver set suitable and without radiation."

Adequate assessment was sent to the Naval Attaché.

IX. Concerning the invasion in Northern Europe the Armed Forces High Command/Intelligence Division places a new report of an obviously very reliable agent dated 17 March who had longer discussions with competent and good informed politicians. Evidently the report is coming via Stockholm. The report is coincident with the reading predominating in Stockholm, saying that since the beginning of March the Anglo-American plans particularly concerning Northern Europe have been changed essentially by the interference of the Russians. Copy of the report as per 10371/44 Geheim in War Diary Part B, Volume V.

The main part in this report is that obviously Russia is observing with highest suspicion the Anglo-Saxon preparations on the Balkans and in North-England and Scotland as well as in Iceland and has risen a peremptory protest in the beginning of March to Washington and London against an operation in Northern Norway. In this connection

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the sending of a Russian ambassador to Iceland which was reported short time ago is winning particular importance.

Situation 20 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group five, at the 19th Group 62 planes over the Bay of Biscay up to 11° West, at the Azores Squadron were two planes detected on missions.

Four British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

The photographic reconnaissance of the southwesterly tip of Cornwall peninsula resulted surprising low amount of small ships in Penzance, Newlyn and Salcombe. There only two LCT 250, 23 auxiliary landing craft, 22 barges and several small boats were observed.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast.

One mine was swept off the Gironde. The blocking between Le Verdon and Pauillac was released. On the contrary the approach of Bayonne was blocked owing to suspected minelaying.

Three submarines were escorted outgoing.

Channel Area

During the night of 19 March one of our own convoys was shelled by British long range batteries off Blanc Nez. Our own batteries answered without observation of effect. Aboard the patrol boat "GROEBEN"

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ready use ammunition was set afire by splinter damage. Other batteries fired on located enemy radar-fitted seaborne unit four miles south east of Dover, which went off on a northwesterly course.

The convoy "CHARLOTTE" arrived at Dieppe the convoy "BROMBERG" arrived at Morlaix roads.

In the afternoon the destroyers Z "23" and ZH "1" anchored at port Tudy roads, the torpedo boats T "27," "29" anchored in Aubin-Bay and "Greif," "MOEVE" at St. Malo roads.

During the night of 20 March one torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas is planned against eastbound convoys in the area of Portlandbill. Moreover, proceeding of the convoys "CHARLOTTE" "HECHT" and "BROMBERG" to the East and transfer of the torpedoboats "27," "29," "GREIF," "MOEVE," "JAGUAR" and "KONDOR" to Le Havre is planned and has been started.

In escorting the convoy "HECHT" the 18th patrol boat Flotilla was engaged with enemy PT-boats in the area of Gris Nez at 2000. The enemy attack was repulsed by sudden burst of defense fire. Hits were obtained on all the enemy vessels. Presumably one PT-boat was sunk.

The convoy "HECHT" (tanker "RECUM" 5 500 BRT) was shelled by British long range batteries with 120 salvos between Gris Nez and Calais and was sunk owing to serious splinter damages.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

On the mine exploding vessel "163" 44 men are missing.

Owing to bad weather conditions the salvage of the Finnish steamer "WIRPI" is not possible. The crew was rescued.

Owing to bad weather conditions the convoy 1233 Hook - Elbe was delayed for another 24 hours.

Owing to stormy weather the escort, minesweeping and clearing duties were highly curtailed.

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Norway, Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

In the morning twelve planes in the afternoon five planes were detected on mission at the 18th Group Command.

Strong enemy reconnaissance aiming detecting of the PQ-convoy yielded not result.

2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 19th March four boats of the 7th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla carried out a reconnaissance thrust in Pumanki-Bay with effect.

On the 18th and 19th March there were busy flights into the area of Vandø and Petsamo.

In the early hours of 20 March lively gunfire was reported from the area of Petsamo.

Twenty-two northbound and 31 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 17 boats and four minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea 29 boats and four minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. One ELM/A* [translator's note: type of British mine] was swept in the Southern outlet of the Sound.

Convoys were carried out without particular incidents. The AF "2," "5," "9," and "49" arrived at Tallinn.

The submarine sighting in Narva Bay reported with 20 March, confirmed to be misobservation.

Owing to weather conditions the patrol forces in the Narva-Bay had to seek shelter toward the coast.

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The Commander Minesweepers East is planning to reinforce the Narva patrol by two Artillery ferry barges.

According to information of the Torpedo Trials Command and the Chief of the Torpedo Branch torpedoes fired from KS and LS-boats* have an uncommonly deep initial dive. Therefore the use of torpedoes by KS-boats on Peipus Lake is impossible.

Therefore the Naval Command East gets the directive to send out the fast KS-boats for patrol and reconnaissance duties on Lake Peipus. The very much lower speeded naval gun carriers are to be employed as powerful backbone of the flotillas. Previously the evacuation of torpedo equipment of the KS-boats will be ceased. But however preparations are to be going on in event that KS-boats should have to operate in other areas.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Nothing to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area.

During the day busy penetrations with approximately 550 bombers and fighters into Belgium and Northern France were reported. Minor attacks were carried out against airfields in the Netherlands and Belgium, one serious attack was carried out on the marshalling yard of Creil. There, 500-600 wagons loaded with Armed Forces and Civil goods were damaged. During the night approximately 75 enemy planes penetrated into the occupied West Area, 45 of them attacked the plant producing high explosives in Angoulême which partially was destroyed. Fifteen planes were detected in supplying agents in the area between Tours and le Creuzot.

Reich Territory:

During the afternoon hours the enemy carried out a medium-sized attack on Mannheim by several hundred bombers with fighter cover. At the same time, a smaller attack was directed against Ludwigshafen. Then, numerous bombs were dropped in the area of Frankfurt/Main - Offenbach however most of them fell in areas where nothing was built upon. In

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Offenbach only two factories were hit. Owing to bad weather conditions only two enemy planes were shot down. During the night of 20 March only isolated harassing planes were reported in the Rhenian Westfalian industrial area and in the area of Karlsruhe - Ulm - Muenchen which in single cases dropped bombs.

Mediterranean Theater.

On 19 March the enemy continued his attacks against our own airfields and traffic installations in the central Italian Area. Thereby he lost five planes. Busy enemy operations in supporting the guerilla bands were observed in Dalmatia and Croatia. The reconnaissance at the Adriatic coast and in the Aegean too was very busy.

On 19 March 68 of our own planes operated in safeguarding the transportation in the area of the Dodecanesus.

Eastern Area.

On 19 March 1720 of our own and 650 enemy operations at the Eastern Front were counted. In suffering twelve own losses 68 enemy planes were shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

At 1230 Tres Forcas reports a battleship and three destroyers with course to the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

Six vessels with 1500 BRT were escorted off the French South Coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

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Enemy Situation:

No reports were submitted from the eastbound convoy which was reported north of Algiers on 19 March.

At 0900 our own air reconnaissance identified off the beachhead of Anzio nine LCT, two steamers four large landing craft, one cruiser, two destroyers and eight escort vessels at 1300 six LCT, seven steamers 18 landing craft and one destroyer.

Five small war vessels sailing north, one LCT and two coastal freighters were observed at the east coast of Sardinia up to Bonifacio Straits.

According to photographic reconnaissance on 19 March six freighters with 14500 BRT, one small tanker and eight LCT's were lying in Ajaccio, in Calvi there were two PT-boats.

Two PT-boats steering easterly course were reported in the Gulf of Cagliari. The German Naval Command Italy points towards striking concentration of PT-boats in the area of Corsica-Sardinia.

At 0500 on 19 March a commando raid was tried by 100 men Badoglio-Troops and De Gaulle-soldiers against the isle of Pianosa. The attack could be repulsed. In six vessels the enemy went off in direction to Corsica.

According to further air reconnaissance 19 steamers were sighted 80 miles south of Tarent, and seven escorting vessels steering a southerly course and two submarines and one escort vessel steering westerly courses were sighted 90 miles south-east of Malta.

Own Situation:

Two TA-boats laid the weather buoy north of Cape Corse as planned. During the night of 19 March one Italian assault boat ran aground south of Civitavecchia and is towed off. Owing to unfavorable weather conditions the Italian MAS boats suspended the transfer from Spezia to Stefano.

In the enemy air raid on Porto Ferraio on 19 March two naval landing craft were damaged.

The minesweeper M "7010" sank during the enemy air raid on Piombino on 20 March. Two tanker barges were damaged. During the air raid on Ercole heavy damage was inflicted on approach roads.

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Altogether 7300 BRT were escorted at the Italian West coast on 19 March. Owing to bad weather conditions barge-convoys were curtailed.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon 15 boats and three small war vessels were identified in Corsica and 25 boats in Lissa.

According to report of the 264th Infantry Division the isle of Solta was occupied by strong British, American and Tito forces on 19 March. Our own company was exhausted after hard struggle and partially taken prisoner.

Own Situation:

During the night of 16 March the naval battery Prvic (north of Raab) shelled to two enemy boats.

On 19 March the minelayer "RAMB III" temporarily ran aground off Grado and then entered in Trieste.

On 18 March one steamer was set afire with bombs and gunfire and sunk by enemy planes. On the evening of 19 March Monfalcone was attacked by enemy planes. However the damage in shipyards is of minor importance.

b. Aegean:

Nothing to report.

c. Black Sea

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

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Own Situation:

The patrol line in the Dnepr-Liman pressed an unknown small vessel to the shore but did not fire on the boat because this was the own coast. During the night of 20 March, the patrol lines reported an enemy vessel twelve miles east of Otshakow.

Nothing to report from the patrol-line Kerch-Straits.

In Nicolaev the coal bridge and 2/3 of the coal jetty was blown up.

In the 2nd decade of March 25618 tons of cargo, 2107 soldiers and 729 horses were transferred to Crimea. By that in total 40 000 tons were carried to Crimea in the first twenty days of March.

According to report of the Admiral Black Sea the Commanding General of the Army High Command 17 neither did apply for the sabotage operation nor has he planned it and judges the possibilities of success very limited. The Admiral Black Sea has the same viewpoint and does not intend to use precious PT-boats for this task.

By that the Naval Staff considers this matter as finished and informs the Armed Forces High Command/Intelligence Division accordingly.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance

For a new time the Anglo-Saxons were asked for invasion by Prawda. At present suppositions to strike against Germany from the South and West would be the most favorable. The Germans could not stop the Russian advancing concentrations. However before capturing Lemberg and Odessa the Russian success would not be complete.

In accentuating the desire for further negotiations for a new time the Finnish answer given on 17 March emphasizes the impossibility of accepting conditions in advance which may deeply cut into the life of the Finnish people. Evidently, the precise wording exerts itself on behalf of not cutting the thread completely.

The reported intervention of the King of Sweden already has happened some time ago. Obviously this only dealt with forwarding of the King's own opinion which was in accordance with the Government's point of view to the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs by the Swedish ambassador, saying that it would be desirable when the contact which was taken up, would not be cut again and contained a request of the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs to announce this to the Finnish President of State Mannerheim and the Government. According to a report of the German ambassador in Stockholm the message of the King of Sweden to Mannerheim was also speaking of secret informations of possibly further Russian concessions.

The Finnish Government published an official statement on the negotiations with the Soviet Union, wording according to German Press Agency in War Diary Part C Volume III.

Conference on the situation with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General:

Owing to stranding of a steamer the evacuation of the KS-boats* from Kiel projected for Lake-Peipus is postponed from 23. resp. 25 March to the beginning of April.

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

The Foreign Press began to report on the German proceedings in Hungary. From German side no publications of this action has not yet been made.

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With effect from 1 April 1944 a prohibited area was ordered in Great Britain which is comprehending a coastal strip of about ten miles depth from Wash up to Land's End.

Moreover a smaller area in the Firth of Forth was blocked.

After having announced the striking special precautions for traffic restriction in Southern England the question arises whether the loud publication of these measures do not serve for deceiving purposes and represent a typical British bluff.

According to a report of the Foreign Office, Greece guerilla leaders made common course with German Armed Forces headquarters for fighting the communists. British agents too, who fight in this area are trying to enter this joint front.

In a highly restricted circle.

III. Army Situation:

Situation is developing very critically at the Eastern Front in the area east of Lemberg. Tokens of enemy outflanking operation are revealing. Kovel is surrounded. Danger to Brest-Litovsk would have very serious consequences for the supply of the whole Central Army Group.

Enemy concentration in the area of the Army Group North is lasting on.

In Italy, the heavy fighting at Cassino is continuing.

Special Items

I. The Groups, the Naval Commands, the German Naval Command Italy and the Commander Submarines Mediterranean on 20 March were informed of the occupation of Hungary by the following Telegram:

"Effecting the visit of the Hungarian Reich Commissioner Horthy to the Fuehrer on 18 March, German troops were transferred to Hungary from 19 March. By that, the Reich Commissioner and the new Government which will be formed and which will follow clearer course in German sense and also steer stronger inner political course as in the past is to be backed up. The former Government has already resigned, the new Government with Imredy as Prime Minister is developing. Up to now the action is going on as planned."

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II. The following directive was received by the Commander (mine-sweeper) East with copy to Naval Command East:

"Without any reference to the Finnish intentions of blocking the Finnish Skerry-waters north of the Seeligel barrages, own blocking of the Finnish Skerries and reinforcements of the northern part of the Seeigel has to be planned and prepared without Finnish participation, in event that Finland may be compelled what is not expected at present, by development of the situation to go out of the war. Plannings and requirements of materiel are to be reported soon.

The German Naval Command Italy reports that for the establishment of the Italian Coast Patrol Flotillas now 150 soldiers are at disposal forming the first group whose duties are planned on vessels with mixed German-Italian complements, after having experienced five weeks military training time on shore and that means with one flotilla in the Western Adriatic and two flotillas in the area of Genoa-Specia and Leghorn-Piombino-Straits.

The Naval Staff granted permission to this intention and points out that personnel trained ashore and at sea already is existing at the 1st Italian Naval Division in Bordeaux and to which could be recoured in direct accordance with the Group Command South in event of further requirements.

Situation 21 March 1944

I. Warfare in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Attache in Tokyo receives the following directive:

1. "The "JUNKER," "LUEDDEN," "STRIEGLER," "SCHNEEWIND," and "PAHLS" are to speed up their routine dockyard times.

2. Combat boats are to take over three plus one torpedo.

Complete cargo according to the small number of torpedoes.

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3. Just as in case of supplying "KIEFER" the "JUNKER" agrees upon two supply meeting points and time with the master of the "BOGOTA" the knowledge of which only is relied upon the two participated Commanding Officers and the master of the "BOGOTA." By that, all broadcasting of place and time by the Naval Staff should be avoided. All boats are to put out in such a manner that supply could be executed within short time in the area scheduled. Camouflage the putting out of the "BOGOTA" as much as possible that no clue could be afforded to enemy agents.

4. In event that meeting does not take place the "JUNKER" will transmit the new supply point in code "Tibet" according to referring points of the "BOGOTA." Secure additional equipment with code records and referring points for all five boats.

5. After supplying the homeward bound boats, the supply of the "U-HERWARTZ" is projected. This would be in approximately 6 to 8 weeks. Also, the "JUNKER" agrees upon two meeting points for the "HERWARTZ" with the "BOGOTA." Personal transmitting to the HERWARTZ would be carried out later at sea by one of the boats.

6. For homeward bound boats delivering of 50 to 70 m³ of fuel and provisions for three or four weeks is projected. The "HERWARTZ" needs full provisions and 210 m³ of fuel.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group was one, at the 19th Group were 46 planes detected on mission. Four British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic coast:

Two outgoing submarines were escorted. The destroyers Z "23" and ZH "1" put out to the Gironde and will be detailed to Le Verdon for emergency help to submarines.

On 20 March mines were swept as scheduled three mines west of Bayonne, one mine off the Gironde mouth and another two mines without further reliance to the spot. Bayonne blocking is released.

In attacking the convoy of two dredgers enemy planes set afire one of these dredgers, one attacking plane was shot down by VP 4C1.

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On 20 March one Fortress was shot down by naval antiaircraft artillery near Quimper [possibly Quimper].

Channel Area.

Regarding the loss of the tanker "RECUM" the Group West reports, that the ship was really sift by splinters of the 120 enemy salvoes. The crew is rescued.

The battle-brief report of the 18th Patrolboat Flotilla of the PT-boat engagement on 20 March from 2140-2155 see Radiogram 0555.

Supplementary to that, the Group West transmits the report of the 2nd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla on the sinking of the tanker "RECUM" and the rescue of the crew. Copy see Radiogram 0755. In escorting the convoy "BROMBERG" the 10th Minesweeping Flotilla was engaged with enemy PT-boats northeast of Lezardrieux and repulsed them. On 20 March at 1730 this convoy was attacked with bombs on Morlaix-roads by 16 enemy fighter bombers without effect. At 0830 the convoy weighed anchor on Lezardrieux roads.

Continuation of the transfer to the east is projected on the evening of 21 March.

Regarding the operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla against the east bound convoy between Portlandhill and Needles Point is reported that it has estimated from enemy Radiograms that the WP-convoy must have brought to safety in Weymouth-Bay. Thus hiding all possibilities for attack, the operation was suspended. The Group West points out, that presumably the enemy was informed of the putting out of the PT-boat Flotillas by agents' broadcastings, because there is the striking fact that just in same manner as in sending out of Flotillas during the night of 15 March the first PT-boat warnings and countermeasures already were ordered before the PT-boat had passed Quessant and before they were reported by the aircraft of the 19th Group.

At both the days the adequate radiograms of the enemy were introduced by the word "Confidential." Details see Radiogram 1040.

During the night of 21 March the Group West reports the plan to execute exercises with the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla west of the Channel Islands.

The convoy "CHARLOTTE" arrived at Boulogne as planned. Proceeding to the East is planned during the night of 21 March.

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During the night of 20 March the boats of the 4th and 5th Torpedoboat Flotillas were transferred to Cherbourg, from where the execution of the minefield operations N 15 and 16 were projected during the night of 21 March.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Naval Command North reports that the crew of a Danish fishing smack having returned from the fishing grounds reported on 17 March that they sighted three British minesweepers sweeping with gear and escorted by destroyers approximately in AN 6640. At 1849 on the same day Radio Monitoring located a British vessel in AN 6447. The Naval Command North begged the 3rd and 5th Air Force to pay particular attention to the continuous aerial survey of the waters up to 2° East between 54 and 57° North with the focal point over the German declared area.

2. Own Situation:

Owing to stormy weather and rough sea convoy duties were curtailed and minesweeping detained.

The convoy 1233 Hook-Elbe put out from Hook at 1930.

55 675 BRT were escorted in the Zealand Waters. Owing to bad weather the patrol boat positions were not occupied.

Norway, Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nineteen planes were in operation at the 18th Group.

At 1144 the Russian reconnaissance reported nine minesweepers off Kiberg.

According to Radio Monitoring Radiogram records are revealing in clear that during the last time a strikingly high number of USA-war

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correspondents from North Africa or the USA-home area resp. have transferred to North Ireland.

2. Own Situation:

On the evening of 19 March and on 20 March busy enemy flights were observed in the area of the Polar coast.

On the evening of 19 March the Radar-battery Kiberg located several targets in south-westerly direction, presumably PT-boats. On the morning of 21 March three anchored, well conserved Russian horn-mines were found off the port entrance of Vadsoe by harbor defense-boats which presumably were laid by PT-boats on 19 March. The grid square AC 6476 was blocked owing to suspected minelaying.

At 0832 the northbound convoy was approached by a Mosquito off Stadlandet which turned away after having been fired on.

Twenty nine northbound and 35 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 29 boats, in the Baltic Sea 13 boats and three mine exploding vessels were engaged in minesweeping. Two mines were swept in the Sound and one in the Kiel Bay.

Convoys of transportation were carried out as planned.

Owing to bad weather conditions the convoy destroyer Z "36" with one hospital ship, one transport and one tanker called at Sassnitz. Owing to the same reason the netlayer and nettender returned to Kiel.

The minesweeper M "3122" was towed to Tallinn. During the night of 20 March the "TOGO" operated with "NETTELBECK."

The Narva-Bay was guarded by four minesweepers, three patrolboats, four armed fishing vessels and two artillery ferry barges. The artillery ferry barges repulsed enemy air raids. Net working was continued as planned.

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The area of Tyeters [?] is free of ice. On the lake Peipus and Pskov a closed ice cover was reported on 19 March but with increased number of cracks.

On the mainland front our own coastal batteries are suffering enemy gunfire and low level attacks. The own battery at Marekuelā directed its harassing fire towards the enemy pen constructions and concentration at Magerburg.

V. Submarine Warfare.

From the Indian Ocean the submarine U "168" declared her arrival with the crew of "BRAKE" at Batavia for 24 March.

With 19 March the Submarine U "183" reports one quadruple spread salvo fired by enemy submarine from LF 4277 which was out manoeuvred.

In the Northern Atlantic in grid square BE 3591 the submarine U "413" sighted a convoy of five steamers heading West.

The attacking areas of the Group PREUSSEN had been extended to 100 miles thus avoiding stationed disposition. Up to now already six boats again were lost in the Atlantic during this month. One is anxious about further four boats.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area.

During the day strong groups with fighter cover penetrated into the Belgian Northern French area. Watten was attacked without effect. Gunfire raids were carried out on various airfields. Thereby one Ju 52, one He 117, two FW 200 and two FW 190 were lost.

Minelaying was reported from Western France in the coastal waters of St. Brioux by 15 planes and in the area of the Gironde mouth by ten planes.

144 of our own bombers were sent out to London, 123 of them reached their target. Good effect was observed in the ordered target area. Nine planes were lost.

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Reich Territory:

During the day only isolated penetrations into Northern and Western Germany were reported. During the evening hours about 30-40 planes were over the Rhenian Westfalian industrial area and dropped some bombs. Isolated planes penetrated into Northern Germany to the East up to the area south of Rostock-Neustrelitz.

Mediterranean Theater.

On 20 March only moderate air reconnaissance was reported in the Aegean in the Otranto Straits and in the Adriatic. In the Italian area anti-aircraft batteries near Civitavecchia and the harbor of Porto Ercole and St. Stefano were attacked. Further attacks were directed against railroad targets near Terni and Oviato. During this attack three attacking planes were shot down by fighters. A station south of Florence was raided by an unknown number of planes and destroyed it. 420 enemy planes operated in the front area and attacked own positions and traffic targets in the area of Rome. One Spitfire was shot down by our own fighters.

Owing to ground attack planes operations in the front area, three FW 190's were lost.

No reports in our own operations.

Eastern Area.

1146 own and 400 enemy missions were counted on the Eastern Front. Seven of our own and 25 enemy planes were lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

At 0915 a convoy consisting of 51 freighters, nine tankers, one auxiliary cruiser with seven corvettes passed Europa Point with course to the Mediterranean.

At 1145 Cape Spartel reported seven one-stake-destroyers with course to the Atlantic.

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Own Situation:

Four vessels with 1200 BRT were escorted off the French South coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

No further reports arrived of the battleship escorted with three destroyers which was reported on 20 March north of Cape Tres Forcas heading East.

Since 14 March, one convoy group forming up at 1500 and going off was observed south of Anzio.

On the afternoon of 20 March and in the morning of 21 March three resp. six minesweepers were reported in the area of Anzio.

According to Army report there were south of Anzio at 1600 one cruiser and two PT-boats heading South and five destroyers, seven escort vessels and 15 landing craft also heading South, were sailing Southerly course at 1600.

The increased strengthening of patrols which was observed during the last days was traced back by the German Naval Command Italy to the trouble caused by the operations of the Italian MAS and assault boats.

From 2210-2245 on 20 March two destroyers shelled our own battery in the area of St. Giorgio without effect. The fire was replied. The destroyers showed off burning.

Strong aerial survey of the western and eastern Italian ports is lasting on.

According to Radio Monitoring one ship transmitted SOS-report at 0800 about 60 miles east of Cape Bon.

Own Situation:

On 20 March one schooner was sunk, one ferry was damaged. The further execution of unloading in St. Stefano in spite of strongest air raids was particularly acknowledged by the German Naval Command Italy.

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The operation of the MAS-boats off the Beachhead on 19 March was suspended, owing to bad weather conditions. Returning to home base the boat was chased and fired on by enemy motor gun boats.

During the night of 20 March minesweeping on the own barrages was ineffective.

The submarine U "969" occupied the area off Algiers as operation area.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

In the bay of Solta air reconnaissance sighted four great and five small boats, two motor boats in Jelsa-Bay on Hvar.

Own Situation:

In surveying the waters of Raab during the night of 20 March the submarine chaser "205" sighted nothing. During the night of 20 March the torpedoboat TA "21" left Pola for patrolling the area between Raab and Zara. Owing to engine trouble the PT-boat S "61" is not ready for war.

The Sea Defense Commandant of South Dalmatia reported to the Admiral Adriatic that forced reconnaissance of Solta with 300 men is planned for the night of 21 March. The transfer of the troops will be carried out by four Z-boats and Brandenburg boats. Support of PT-boats is requested for the area south of Isvenio - Solta from 2200. Returning of troops is projected after 24 hours.

b. Aegean.

The only naval ferry barge which remained of the group which was attacked during the night of 18 March by enemy destroyers and PT-boats off Navarino could not be brought in up to now. Enemy air raids were carried out against this vessel.

At 0545 on 20 March one motor sailing ship was sunk by enemy submarine 30 miles north-northwest of Rethymoon. The crew was rescued by coastal vessel.

At 0435 on 21 March one coast-protecting boat was attacked by two torpedo misfires of a submarine off the Mudros-Bay.

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One enemy plane was shot down over Kyparissia in the afternoon. On the afternoon of 20 March one coastal patrol boat was shelled by 7,5 cm on 4 cm guns in execution of mopping-up operations on Pelion-peninsula. The fire was replied with good effect.

On 21 March the coastal protecting boat GA "57" ran aground north of Cape Promiri. The crew was taken from board. Owing to mine detonation another coastal protecting vessel GA "93" sank while executing minesweeping duties. The crew is rescued completely.

Owing to bad weather conditions escort duties were postponed. Up to now six E-mines* were blown up at Syra. Another mine was swept. The harbor could be released for small shipping.

c. Black Sea.

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Enemy vessels, presumably motor gun boats which were sighted on the evening of 20 March at the Dnepr-Liman could not be brought to a stand by our own naval ferry barges owing to bad sight and high speed.

The tug which stranded at Kinburn on 19 March was sighted sailing to the East, presumably she was salvaged by the enemy. At 1956 three naval landing craft in the patrol lines of Dnepr-Liman were shelled by enemy batteries. The naval landing craft of the patrol line of Kerch-Straits remained without contact with the enemy during the night of 20 March.

On the evening of 20 March Kamisch Burun was shelled by a 12 cm battery on Cape Tassla. No break downs. Since two days the aerial railway across Kerch-Straits is out of action.

Three PT-boats transferred from Balaklawa to Ivanbaba.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance

No particular reports.

The Commander in Chief, Navy returned from the Fuehrer's Headquarters. Copy of the discussions contains the writing 1 SKL 933/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Book VII.

Conference on the situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy at 1800.

The Commander in Chief, Navy explains several decisions which had been made at the Fuehrer's discussion.

For the rest no particular reports and decisions.

Special Items

I. Regarding the Army situation the Armed Forces Operations Staff Navy is reporting:

"Eastern Situation"

Army Group A: Further enclosing of enemy bridgeheads north of Nicolaev.
Army Group South: The strong enemy pressure at the 1st and 4th Tank Army is lasting on. Further accentuation of the situation.

Italy:

Further tokens indicate, stronger enemy attacks as imminent.

II. Concerning Hungary the information runs as follows:

Movements going on as planned. The attitude of the Hungarian Armed Forces is still much obliging, the population is friendly, numerous racial German applied voluntarily for the German Armed Forces. Difficulties in forming the new Government had not yet been overcome. The Fuehrer is bent on maintaining the demands. Our own forces would be strong enough to enforce the development in our senses.

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III. On 13 March the Commander in Chief, Air Force Inspector of aircraft mines forwarded the following report of an agent:

In accordance with informations which obviously are deriving from the occupied zone was to have been stated that from the month of November of the past year the Germans should have begun laying closed minefields and new belts of magnetic mines in order to prevent large scale attacks of surface forces. According to orders of the Royal Navy and in accordance with the Headquarters of the Combined Operations and the Americans further inquiries were made at the Coastal Commands for stating how many devices they would have available in order to execute sweeping missions in combined operations. By reason of that answer power current arcs were immediately built in Wellington-aircraft. Three wings were detailed to the Combined Operation and subordinated to this area of command.

Thereupon the Operations Div/Naval Staff has informed the Chief of the Underwater Obstacles Branch with copy to the Group West and gave the directives to examine the question of firing devices of mines which were projected for alarm minefields in the West Area. In order to obtain either the losses of the minesweeping planes by firing the mines with the primitive magnetic firing device or at the other hand to preserve the efficiency of the barrages against landing fleets the mixing of fuse devices would be necessary in proportion to 2/3 M 1,* 1/3 MA 2-firing* and exchange of firing devices on mines already stockpiled in the West Area according to production of the MA-2* devices.

IV. Concerning the Baltic Area the Commander in Chief Luftwaffe/Operations Staff directed by reason of the informations on the situation:

The reinforcement of the 5th Minesweeping Group demanded by the Operations Div./Naval Staff has to be carried out by the inspector of aircraft mine in recourse to the group reserves in such a manner that the 5th Minesweeping Group could solve the tasks which would appear in its area. If need be, the reserve training group would also be called transitory for minesweeping duties in the Baltic Sea in the area of the Commanding Admiral Defences East.

V. Concerning "Tanne" and "Tanne 1" the Commander in Chief, Air Force reported the Air Force remittances to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff. Information of the Naval Staff has been made by the Armed Forces Operations Staff Navy. Copy as per 1 SKL I op 890/44 GKdos Chefsache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

VI. On 17 March the Groups, the Naval Commands and the German Naval Command Italy received the following directives concerning the destruction of ships of occupied Allied, neutral states in event of landing operations:

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"So far as merchantmen could be removed no more from threatened ports in event of landing operations, practice as follows:

1. Destroy ships of occupied and Allied States.
2. Do not destroy ships of the Red Cross and other ships charged with humanitarian tasks (such as Swedish grain ships in Greece).
3. Do not destroy ships of neutral states to which the navigation was also allowed by the enemy (Swiss ships and ships which are running in Swiss charter, Spanish ships in fruit shipping for Sweden and Switzerland in ports of the French South coast).
4. Destroy neutral ships, which are running for German interest (Spanish ships in fruit-shipping or ore-shipping for Germany at the French South coast, Spanish ships in ore-shipping in Bayonne, Swedish ships in ports of the North Sea and Baltic Sea).

Take care in acting as per cypher 4. that ships only have to be destroyed in event of imminent danger to the harbor concerned and before it has to be tried to remove the ships from the threatened harbor in case of need with German crews. In case of annihilation, the ships have to be used in the best way for blocking the harbor or the fairway in order to give reasons for sinking as military necessity to the neutral states.

Supplement: Further regulations will follow as to treatment of the crews.

This directive was sent for information to the Foreign Office with the following remark:

Following to that, the destruction of neutral ships only can be done under conditions which were named in telegram there. As to military reasons, however, it does not seem possible to meet the fact of your suggestion renouncing the sinking of neutral ships. It must be counted on that neutral ships which operate in German interest would be immediately taken over by the enemy and at the least partially they would be confiscated by the enemy as prize and by that would finally be lost for the neutral state. As to military matters, it does not seem capable of being supported that these ships might be captured by the enemy.

VII. The Naval Staff took its viewpoint on the question of operating with the battleship "CAVOUR" which was suggested some time ago as follows:

1. Her use as floating battery does mean a large requirement of precious personnel with only restricted efficiency. Want of personnel

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in details: seamen and other branches 20 officers, 619 other ranks, altogether 24 officers, 809 other ranks = 833 men. The high number of technical personnel comes from the own supply and damage control necessary to the ship. Beyond that, making the ship ready for war would require essential shipyard capacity on personnel and materiel.

2. If the CAVOUR would be set aground the personnel projected for nautical management and damage control would be reduced to a certain part. But requirement of personnel for own supply would remain to full extent. In this case there may be added, that a favorable place of operation would highly rely on the depth of water.

3. In both the cases precious personnel would be withheld at a place, which according to the general situation does not range to this priority. The manning only would be possible in taking up gaps at other places, i.e. at the Group West.

4. In using the heavy artillery on shore the following amount of time would be needed: removal of turrets approximately four months, erection ashore approximately nine months. For that very big fortifications, rock blastings, pits and very large amount of concrete would be necessary.

Therefore according to the Naval Staff's opinion the removal of the guns and the erection ashore does not likewise come into question considering the large temporal and material expenses, all the more since the disposition of personnel remains likewise fully uncertain in the present insufficient allocations.

Already this was decided on 6 Jan. 1944.

As desired the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy was informed correspondingly on 13 March.

VIII. With 21 January 1944 the Commanding Admiral of the Group West forwarded a memoir on armoured PT-boats. Copy as per 1 SKL 256/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part B Volume V.

At first the possibility of technical execution and the proposals of the Commanding Admiral, Group West and of the Commander (E-boats) would be examined at the Quartermaster Division.

Situation 22 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

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Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group seven, at the 19th Group 36 at the Azores Squadron two planes were detected on mission. Eight British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast

One mine was swept off La Pallice. Three mine detonations were observed in the area of Brest. One Submarine was escorted entering the harbor.

Channel Area

One mine was swept off Lezardrieux. From 2125 to 2207 the convoy "CHARLOTTE" was shelled by long range batteries between Boulogne and Calais partially with straddling salvos and slightly damaged by splinters, but did not become waterlogged. As to suspended minesweeping the transfer only was carried out up to Calais.

Proceeding is pretended during the night of 22 March.

The convoy steamer "BROMBERG" transferred from Lezardrieux to St. Aubin-Bay. Proceeding to Jersey-Cherbourg is planned during the night of 22 March.

In checking the waters nine miles northwest of St. Valerie en Caux at 2255 on 22 March the 4th and 8th Motorminesweeper Flotilla with six boats met enemy PT-boats which shoved off after having been fired on. Battle brief report see Radiogram 1050.

On the evening of 21 March the 4th and 5th Torpedo-boat Flotillas with six boats carried out both the minefield tasks and supplied mines in Le Havre in between. During the time of operation the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas were at sea off Cherbourg. During the night of 22 March torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla against the GW-Convoy is projected and already begun. At 2200 the flotillas suspended the operation owing to deterioration of sightings.

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III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea

Escort, minesweeping and clearing duties partially were curtailed owing to rough sea. Mines were swept as scheduled: north of Langeoog one, north of Wangeoog seven, north of Roter Sand four.

On 22 March the 32 Minesweeping Flotilla shot down two enemy planes and damaged another three.

The convoy 1233 Hook-Elbe entered with six steamers.

Four convoys with approximately 62 000 BRT were carried through in the Zuider Sea and the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters

Enemy Situation:

In forenoon 35 planes were detected on missions at the 18th Group and eleven ones in the afternoon. At 1711 one British vessel was located in AN 2825.

Our own air reconnaissance spotted the fishing harbor of Peterhead, no shipping was observed. In the Peterhead Bay there were one tanker or ore-ship of approximately 2000 tons and one small coastal vessel. Some patrol boats were at sea off Peterhead.

In the port of Aberdeen there were ten thought to be landing craft, one thought to be submarine, one ship of unknown type with two stakes and four medium sized freighters.

Own Situation:

The mines which were found off Vadoe were not at anchor but drifting.

On the evening of 20 March lively flights were carried out into the area of Petsamo/Kirkenes/Vadoe presumably for minelaying.

At 0930 on 21 March the aerial cover of a westbound convoy sighted a submerged submarine northwest of Vadoe and attacked her with bombs without observing the effect.

At 0225 on 22 March one submarine has been detected in the outlet of Baas Fjord and was fought with deterrent depth charges.

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Suspected submarine was also reported on the afternoon of 21 March in the southern approach of Aalesund where detonations and two torpedo tracks were observed.

At 0905 on 22 March one telescope was sighted in Foldafjord. In the noon two torpedo tracks were sighted in the outlet of Westfjord one detonation was heard ashore.

At 1400 the Norwegian steamer "NARVIK" (241 BRT) was sunk with gunfire by an enemy submarine north of the aircraft observer post 13 on 6645 North, 1311 East. Only four seriously wounded men were rescued out of ten passengers and the crew. Another sighting of telescope was reported from Bodoe-Roads at 1450.

In face of this essentially increased activity of enemy submarines the convoy escort in the Norwegian shipping would be exposed to heavy load trial.

Thirty eight northbound and 33 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Enemy Situation:

The Radio Monitoring detected busy wireless communications between Kronstadt and Lavansaari. In the Gulf of Finland the minesweeper T "207" and 29 other war vessels were detected at sea.

Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 26, in the Baltic Sea nine boats and four minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping.

Five mines were swept in the Kiel Bay. In the evening the penetrations of numerous enemy planes into the western Baltic Sea and Kiel Bay were observed, evidently in attempting further minelaying operations. Owing to this penetration channel blocking was ordered and 16 boats of the 1st Defence Flotilla were sent out for minesweeping. Escort duties were carried out without particular incidents.

North of Odensholm one boat with refugees of 26 occupants proceeding to Finland was captured by the patrol boat Vp "303" and brought to Paldiski. The netlaying tasks were continued. For the rest no particular events.

By reason of the discussions between the Chief of Staff of the Commander Minesweepers East and the Finnish General Valve (see War Diary

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16 March) the Naval Staff allots 600 buoys with anti sweeping cutter and 400 explosive floats G to the Commander Minesweepers East for Finnish use. Owing to the present situation in production it would not be possible to deliver the total number of 1000 sweep obstructors only in buoys with anti sweeping cutter just as was asked for.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The Group "Preussen" has been dissolved in the North Atlantic. Two by two, the boats were sent out for western proceedings in broad reconnaissance front and free manoeuvre.

In BE 3580 the Submarine U "413" sunk at least one destroyer from the reported small convoy with triple spread salvo.

In BB 7533 the Submarine U "802" sunk three small steamers of altogether 5000 BRT from a coastal convoy.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area

Routine flights with small groups did not create any attacks during the day. On the evening and during the night of 22 March bombs were dropped on airfields in Belgium and the Netherlands in flying through and returning to and fro the Reich territory. Twelve planes were verified in Western France presumably in dropping agents.

Nineteen of our own planes carried out a harassing attack against London, one FW 190 still is missing.

Reich Territory

On the forenoon several 100 enemy planes with fighter cover penetrated via Hamburg, Wismar for attacking Berlin from the North. This attack was executed from 1306-1340 in 6-7000 m altitude and was estimated to medium size concentrated on the northern or northeastern part of the town. Details see situation of the day.

In Northern Germany only isolated intruder patrols were carried out while a strong enemy group carried out a very heavy raid against Frankfurt on the Main which inflicted much damage. Details see situation of the day.

Up to now no reports were submitted consulting the results of defense during day and night.

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On 21 March 300 enemy missions concentrated on Cassino were reported in the Italian front area. There was weak reconnaissance only in the Adriatic and Aegean. One enemy plane was shot down in isolated intruder patrols raiding against small shipping. One Freya-Detachment was destroyed by seven fighter bombers at Corfu. In Central Italy Railway and transport installations were attacked.

Sixteen of our own fighters shot down one Spitfire, three of our own fighters were lost.

At 1300 on 22 March one convoy consisting of 52 freighters and seven tankers with two destroyers and escorting vessels was spotted west of Oran heading East.

At the same time ships put out of Oran-Bay northbound.

Eastern Area

On 21 March 1254 of our own and 345 enemy operations were counted. Eight of our own and twelve enemy planes were shot down.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Presumably two cruisers of the CAIRO-class one similar to HAWKINS entered Gibraltar during the night of 21 March. Presumably coming from the Mediterranean one convoy consisting of 28 ships entered Gibraltar which later on was followed by four Norwegian freighters and one corvette.

In the afternoon and evening one convoy of 50 ships put out to the Atlantic. Among them there was one monitor, one auxiliary cruiser, one destroyer, besides this one auxiliary aircraft carrier put out to sea westbound. At 0715 Cape Spartel reported one convoy of 13 large tank-transport ships with one destroyer and two corvettes heading west. Thereby a withdrawal of landing craft from the Mediterranean was confirmed for the first time.

Own Situation:

Strike broke out in some shipyards on the southern coast. Up to now no sabotage plots were reported. The objects working on were guarded by the Armed Forces.

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2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 21 March and during the day our own reconnaissance was not executed without any gap owing to bad weather conditions. Common occupation was observed off the beachhead of Anzio.

Own Situation:

At 0248 four motor minesweepers proceeding in transfer for the mining operation "HUETTE" were attacked by enemy PT-boats 20 miles south of Leghorn. Details were not yet known.

Out of three Italian PT-boats being on transfer from Specia-Stefano one boat returned to Specia owing to engine trouble. A second boat entered in Piombino. The third weighed anchor off Punta Aala.

During the last time the ports of the West and East coast were thoroughly surveyed by the enemy air reconnaissance. On the afternoon of 21 March one coastal motor sailing ship proceeding to Benedetto was sunk by plane.

At 1525 on 22 March serious damage was inflicted by the air raid on the shipyard of Leghorn, no damage in the harbor.

During the night of 21 March some planes dropped mines off the beachhead.

The German Naval Command Italy reports the increasing aerial danger of the ports which may be important for the front supply and applied for allocation of mobile heavy naval antiaircraft artillery as the Flak of the Air Force mostly is not at disposal because of the complete absorption. (See Radiogram 1140.)

Further treatment will be done by the Quartermaster Division.

The Commander in Chief Air Force/Operation Staff instructed the Naval Staff info. of the directive to the 2nd Air Force and the Air Force Command South East that the 4th Minesweeping group 1 except four aircraft which are to remain in the northern Adriatic is to be transferred to Tanagra for reinforcement of minesweeping in the Aegean.

3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic

Enemy Situation:

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At 2315 the Freya-device Ankona reported ten ships between Ankona and Pedaso steering North in distance of 29 miles off the coast.

Following the report of a night reconnaissance plane, numerous bigger and smaller vessels were observed between 2214 and 2317 in the area north of Ortona.

On 21 March a large landing craft, six motor boats, one motor sailing ship, 72 smaller sailing ships were observed in the harbor of Vis and 5 small boats, one motor sailing ship, 40 small sailing ships, 60 small rowing boats were observed in the harbor of Comiza.

On the morning of 22 March one motor boat and five sailing ships were sighted east of Solta and north of Vis one motor boat was sighted.

Own Situation:

During the night of 21 March the shock troop operation consisting of 300 soldiers and four Infantry boats landed at Solta Island as planned. But the operation was suspended and the troops returned because the boats of the coastal chasseurs including the battalion Commander could not reach the island owing to bad weather condition. The operation is to be repeated during the night of 22 March. Brief report of the Commander of the 11th Coast Patrol Force on the minelaying operation "Biber" in event of which torpedoboat TA "36" was lost see Radiogram 2000. According to the opinion of the Admiral Adriatic the TA "36" struck our own barrages owing to inaccurate navigation.

b. Aegean

Enemy Situation:

After 1000 on 21 March six ships with alternating courses were sighted in the outer Bay of Calamata which came out of sight at 1300. Presumably it would be a matter of enemy vessels controlling the navigation.

Own Situation:

In the enemy air raid against the Freya device at Corfu the equipment was destroyed. One Spitfire was shot down.

In total 8627 tons of cargo has been transferred to Crete during the time of 1 - 20 March.

c. Black Sea

Enemy Situation:

22 Mar. 1944

One enemy submarine was located south of Kerch-Straits.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Marshall Island

On 18 March USA-battleships shelled the Mille-Atoll. At the same time air raids were carried through.

New Guinea - Bismarck Archipelago

On 20 March Gasamata in New Pommerania was shelled by destroyers. On 21 March US-warships shelled the Japanese base Kawieng at New Mecklenburg. The bombardment lasted for about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

At the same time a landing operation took place against the St. Mathias group of Islands north of Kawieng. Emirau Island was occupied by American Forces.

Java Sea

Following Reuter one British submarine was engaged with a big river steamship at the East coast of Sumatra and left her behind sinking.

Burma

In North-Burma the Japanese began counter offensive operations. The Japanese attack is directed against the Burmanian Indian boundary and the town of Manipur.

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Items of Political Importance

Following a report of reliable diplomatic sources in London the Russians are planning after rejection of their conditions of armistice by the Finns to accomplish the fighting against this country up to the final capitulation regardless of the Anglo-Saxon desires. Moscow counts on a capitulation of Finland occurring not later than in summer of this year.

As to the military planning the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff has the impression that a Russian large scale attack would not be projected at the Finnish Front before long. But in contrary to that, serious preparations for attack are made against the mountain Army High Command 20 in order to separate German and Finnish groups west of Kandalaksha and to isolate the Mountain Corps. The Armed Forces Operations Staff has the opinion that at present the Finnish Crisis would be concluded and that no further negotiations would be expected no more. In case of better Russian tactics, Finland's jumping off the line would have been reached.

Hence too may be gathered that evidently the Russians were not urgent in compromising with Finland. Both for Russia and Great Britain the Finnish problem now reached such an importance which is extending far beyond the joint rivalry against Germany. This is one of the inevitable load tests to which the British/Russian relations had to be exposed as soon as the military situation granted resp. challenged it. From this aspect does it not seem to be completely certain that the British/Finnish attempts to emancipate this country, which will have within the framework of future British/Russian quarrels very essential political strategic importance, even now, for a comparatively high prize from its present relation in arranging it finally into the British order of assembly. Therefore, first of all the fact is involved that no Russian Troops are allowed in the decisive territories of the country. If this would be reached, so all the other concession would be of transitory nature. Therefore it would be necessary to study further developments of the situation with great care.

In Hungary the formation of new Government under Imredy did not succeed. A New Cabinet is formed by Fieldmarshal - Lieutenant Stojay, former Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin. Six Ministers of the former Cabinet are representing the new one. Therefore, this is considered an outspoken solution of distress which in no case is fully equivalent to the projects of the German Command. The Fuehrer sharply condemns these tactics of retardation at the Hungarian side and now as ever is bent on precipitating matters to absolutely clear and radical decision.

According to a report of the Military Attache in Ankara dated with 19 March and coming from reliable sources, troop transports of Indian

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and Russian contingents are carried from Bagdad via Aleppo to Tripoli (Syria) since the middle of February. Among them Russian naval troops are certainly discovered. Assumption has been stated that these naval troops would be appointed for the Italian fighting ships which are to be taken over in the next time.

These precautions too, throw light on the increasing political demands of Russia to her own Allies and confirm the exceeding goal of the Russian policy into the very Mediterranean.

The Commander in Chief, Navy went to Gotenhafen for inspection.

Conference on the situation with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.

I. The General Staff of the Army informs the Naval Staff from the directive to the Army Group A saying that this Group should be responsible for the information of the Naval Group South on the military situation in its own area.

II. Report of the Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff:

It is understood from a captured order of the Secret Service from 1941 which was demanding strictest precautions of secrecy to protect the sources of the service that certainly at this time no identification of the German sources worth mentioning were made as for instance by breaking in in coding proceedings and such things.

III. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff.

a. References to the examination of the question on the part of Armed Forces High Command whether all business of provisions, clothing, construction, motor transport, cash work, the supply and transport systems for all the services could be concentrated in the own Armed Forces organization. On the part of the Navy, the Captain (Navy) Ruhfus will be detached to the commission which is to examine this question.

From the Navy's point of view the execution of this kind of precaution would appear very critical. All the experiences made up to now, already have confirmed that the leading responsibility of one part of the Services which in this case would evidently come to the army, would have worked out very injuriously for the rest. In order to

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put its task to good account and not to become degraded to a simple part of the army, the Navy must refuse all the attempts which could create advantages and relief in some certain less important points only, but principally would injure the good fighting trim of the naval forces and hence the conduct of naval warfare too.

b. The position of the Special Weapons Division was cancelled, owing to the ordered establishment of the Naval Special Duties Staff with the direction of which the Vice Admiral Weichhold was charged.

In a highly restricted circle

IV. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff reports, that in accordance to the report of the Military Attache in Helsinki the German ambassador there has expressed his most serious political doubts in strong terms concerning to a possible occupation of the Aland Islands. It cannot be understood why the Naval Attache Helsinki has approached the ambassador with the interest of the Navy to this group of isles.

The Chief of Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff proposes ~~sharp reprimand~~ (not exactly that) of the attaché to which the Chief of Naval Staff agrees. [Translator's note: the original is crossed through by the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff and is corrected by handwriting as follows.] The Naval Attaché Helsinki will be informed in the right way by the Chief of Staff of the Naval Staff.

V. The Chief of Operations Branch:

The following directives are provided for information of the Group South concerning Hungary:

a. 1. "The transfer of German troops to Hungary is carried on under the keyword "Margarethe." The Operations Staff "Margarethe" in Budapest is conducted by the Major General Foertsch.

2. The Special Command 111 in strength of 150 men and under command of 1st Lieutenant Feist disposed by the Navy for imminent previous safeguarding of the Hungarian Danube-Flotilla still stays at Linz, the base of Danube Flotilla.

3. Operational employment of this Special Command 111 will but occur on request of the Operations Staff "Margarethe." Reconnaissance for this operation was done by 1st Lieutenant Jaeger who

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was attached to the Operations Staff "Margarethe" by the Operations Div/Naval Staff. Up to now the Special Command lll was not yet instructed of its task.

4. This task will be immediately handed over to the Naval Group South, which instead of the Special Command lll will put at disposal forces from its own area.

5. Up to the time in which the disposition of forces from the area of the Naval Group South will be executed and estimated on for 1 April, the Special Command lll temporarily will be subordinated to the Group South as to operational matters. Relief of the 1st Lieutenant Jaeger by the Naval Group South as soon as possible.

6. Acknowledge receipt."

b. "The development of situation in Hungary may make it possible that the operational employment of Special Command lll would be required. Further information of the Naval Group South will be arranged directly by the Operations Staff "Margarethe"."

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff agreed with this.

Special Items

I. The Admiral Northern Waters/Commander Submarines submitted the following judgment of the situation concerning the fighting against convoys in the Northern Waters during the period of clearness and is demanding decision:

1. "From 30 April to 15 August there all time clearness will be within the northern region. In this given situation the Submarine warfare has to accommodate relevant change of the tactical employment of submarines.

2. There are existing two possibilities for fighting the convoys during the period of clearness:

a. Fighting them stationed at deep quarterline submerged positions whereby the real routes of the enemy have to be watched and covered.

b. Free surface operations of the Submarines in the area of the convoy, hauling ahead in attack positions in distance of the convoy. Defense of the enemy air force, underwater attack with torpedoes.

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3. In addition to 2 a. successful fighting from stationed submerged positions is requiring a proportionally high number of boats to cover the questionable waters and an exact knowledge of the routes in which the enemy is proceeding.

From this submerged position basic changes would not be possible any more. Additionally, there may be suggested in details.

a. At present, the Admiral Northern Waters/Commander Submarines has 27 boats and one test boat at his disposal from which about 15 ones could be put at disposal at times in event of approaching convoys. But this number would be too small for successful fighting in this kind. From here one cannot notice if and if need be, how many new boats could be and were to be brought up to the northern area.

b. But beyond this, it would be difficult especially in the months from June to August as soon as the ice frontier is withdrawing to the North to detect the convoy route in advance in an ample correct manner even if sufficient air reconnaissance would be available. At any time one has to count on the convoys' making way to the North, on greater alternations of course which could not be calculated before and which therewith could by-pass our own submarine position.

4. Referring to 2 b. Free surface operating of the boats in order to reach an outflanking position with following underwater attack has the advantage of mobility and fitting themselves to the situation being.

5. The Admiral Northern Waters/Commander (Destroyers) prefers the fighting referring to 4. provided that one will be successful in changing the armament of all Northern Water-boats on to 3.7 cm up to the end of April. But in this opinion the determinant detail was that up to now air raid danger in the Northern Area is much weaker in comparison with conditions in the Atlantic, especially concerning the appearance of heavy land aircraft and flying boats so that one may suppose that the Submarines in case they changed their armament could repulse the enemy air forces. But on the other hand, the case of the Submarine U "737" (Brasack) stated that against armoured planes (Sunderland pp). no results could be obtained with 2 cm guns even in heavy concentrated fire and at nearest distance and that in event of an attack the boats will be seriously in danger.

6. Out of 28 boats existing in the northern area only six inclusively Submarine U "673" (Sauer) are equipped with 3.7 cm guns; therefore another 22 boats would have to have their guns changed quickly.

7. If agreement will be granted there is requested:

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a. to send immediately both six 3,7 cm to Bergen and Drontheim by special service ship as well 16 to Narvik. The reserves necessary are including these numbers.

b. to send off one training non-commissioned officer of the Flak Training School to Bergen, Drontheim and Narvik.

At first the decision will be made by the Group North/Fleet and Submarine Division op. resp. the Admiral Submarines.

II. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff issued the following directive:

"The remote-control platoon of the coastal chasseurs battalion of the Division Brandenburg is to send in express-transport to the Commanding General Armed Forces South-West for operating against ships targets at the beachhead of Nettuno. The place of destination has to be settled in direct accordance with the Commanding General, Armed Forces South-West. In avoiding danger of early exposing the secret, the operation is but carried out then, when sufficient landing craft will be available and ready for operation at the place of destination. The operation has to be carried out under command of the Navy and in accordance with the special weapons regulations projected by the Navy. In preparing this operation the Division Brandenburg takes up direct contact with the Naval Special Operations Department."

III. The Submarine Division Naval Staff advises the Operations Div./Naval Staff with copy to the directive of the Commander Submarines West, saying that 15 boats of type VII C which will get ready soon have to be kept back in western ports as operational reserve, in event of invasion is named the Group "Marder". The putting out of Type VII-C-boats has to be stopped immediately. The boats are laying at the bases in three hours readiness.

According to reference of the Operations Div./Naval Staff pointing out that the keyword would not be suitable because the keywords "Marder I" and "Marder II" already are used for enemy large scale attacks in Italy, the Submarine Division changed the keyword in "Landwirt". Copy of the directive as per 1 SKL 900/44 GKdos Chefs. resp. 927/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary hand filing "Enemy large scale landings."

IV. Regarding the operation "Tanne" the Naval Command East receives the directive of the Quartermaster Division to take care of right

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timed transport of the 170 naval gunners to Danzig on shore because no steamer could be put at disposal for this task.

V. Corresponding to the proposal of the Naval Staff concerning the authorizations of the battle zones and fortress commanders the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command ordered in completion to the issued regulations:

"1. Military authorities: regarding the cooperation with the Navy the powers granted to the commanders of battle zones and fortress commanders find their clear limits in the regulations of the Fuehrer directive 40. Therefore even fortress commanders are not entitled to interfere in preparations and interests of naval warfare inclusively naval warfare bases or organization of the Navy for this purpose. If, in event of landing operation, the fortress commander has dictatorial powers above all matters involving the defence of the fortress against enemy attacks in order that in case of highest danger in a fortress which is isolated, and all round defending the enemy and throwing into action even the last battle facilities as to personnel or material matters would be upheld. [Editorial Note: To facilitate interpretation of this involved sentence, the following smooth translation is submitted: If, in case of a landing operation, the fortress in the sphere of battle is isolated, the fortress commander has dictatorial power over everything connected with defence of the fortress against enemy attack; that is, in a secluded fortress, defending itself on all sides in case of extreme danger, [the fortress commander has] unlimited authority of command to the repulse of the enemy, over all branches of the armed forces for the purpose of the putting in even the last battle facilities of personnel and materiel for the defence of the fortress.] In any case naval forces which are qualified for fighting outside the fortress get their orders from the commander responsible of the Navy. They have to meet the demands of the fortress commander within the boundaries of their orders and tactical possibilities.

2. Convening officer powers:

The Cypher 5 of the order for fortress commanders (Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff/Op No. 00606/44 GKdos from 27 January 44) will be completed as follows:

"Not before the event of an enemy landing operation, the fortress commander of a fortress isolated in the battle area, gets unrestricted convening powers. Up to this moment, the convening powers admitted to the fortress commanders are confined to such punishable offences of members of other Services or the Waffen-SS which touch the real area

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of defence task of the fortress commanders or in which several Services are shared in."

VI. The Shipping and Transport Branch forwards the effective strength of the vessels which are in the Black Sea and which may be taken as possible effective occupation. Hence it follows the possibility of transportation for 140 960 men with light baggage and small arms in one month in contrary the number of 195 300 men which was calculated by the Operations Div./Naval Staff according to record sent over by the Admiral Black Sea. The figures of the Shipping and Transport Branch do not consider any losses by enemy action however are no maximum number but are corresponding to the experiences made up to now.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff has informed the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy and the Naval Liaison Officer to the High Command, Army/General Staff of the Army that the cyphers calculated up to now by the Operations Div./Naval Staff are the most favorable maximum amounts. Adequate draught as per 1 SKL 8898 in the documents of Situation Maps and Files Section.

VII. Among others in planning the minefields of the Heligoland Bight against enemy landing operations the Naval Command North has announced approximately 3000 coastal mines A with priority. The production of the primers and of the coastal mines A would be possible at the mining and barrage arsenal at Cuxhaven.

The Operations Div./Naval Staff informs the Underwater Obstacles Branch that so far as could now be ascertained, coastal mines A production would be necessary within the following boundaries beyond the first 25000 pieces:

For the Danish area	approximately	1000	pieces
For the French area	"	5000	"
For the Esthonian coast	"	8000	"
In total	"	14000	"

The demands of the Group South were not yet submitted.

At first the Underwater Obstacles Branch was directed to ensure the production of the numbers above mentioned and to project in principal new snag lines for use at the coastal mines type A in order to not retard the efficiency of the barrages which are very difficult to lay by good visibility of hand snaglines equipped with pieces of cork floats.

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VIII. Blasting trials which were executed revealed the qualification of mine barrages to be used as short-timed barrages in protecting war important construction situated near the water, fighting positions, ship berths against low level attacks of aircraft. Particular defence results are promised by this method at those places where one counts on massed low level attacks and where anti-aircraft protection is of no efficiency. By firing these barrages heavy walls of water-columns would arise between the attacking aircraft and the protected object as sort of short-timed barrage, the destroying effect of which would prevent the low level attack. But operation also can be used to stop rotation blast bombs which were already dropped.

Relevant draught Anti-aircraft Artillery Section, from 14 March as per 1 SKL 8829/44 in War Diary Part C Volume VI.

IX. On 10 March the Commander in Chief, Navy ordered the construction of the destroyer 42 C.

X. The Naval Staff informs the Commander Submarines, Mediterranean that at any rate all possibilities would be emptied for construction of pens in Marseille and Toulon. The number of protected places which is required additionally is to be reached in construction of adits. According to report of the Chief of Naval Shore Construction Division from 13 March twelve dry places type XXIII in Marseille and five shelter places type VII in Toulon are to be ensured up to October 1944.

XI. The Commander in Chief, Navy decided that in the months of April to July one PT-boat each has to be delivered to the Romanian Navy. For this purpose four PT-boats which are to be overhauled entirely would be withdrawn from the front during the months of April to May and after having undergone structural overhaul and removal of the engines etc. all four boats would be transferred at the same time towards the end of May because monthly single boat delivery and transfer would not justify the extent of work. The delivery to Romania would be executed after assembly work in Constanța or at another Rumanian shipyard after having accomplished the materiel war readiness.

XII. With the date of 8 March the Vice Admiral Abe requested the Commander in Chief, Navy in a letter to put at his disposal records and

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drawings for the special service submarine with high submerged speed the rough sketch of which should be developed in the German Navy for submission to the Japanese Naval Minister.

Dated 23 March the Commander in Chief, Navy answered with that the construction of these new German Submarines is not yet concluded and that still no kind of practical trials has been made. As soon as these trials should have effected suitable results the Commander in Chief, Navy would be disposed to transmit the relevant records. The Commander in Chief, Navy described it well understood of the Japanese and German Navy for support each other with all powers in the joint struggle against the Anglo-Saxon but does believe that it would not be right to hand over unfinished and unexperienced plans.

XIII. The Chief of Operations Div./Naval Staff and I L embark on the heavy cruiser PRINZ EUGEN in order to participate with the combined exercises of the Training Unit/Fleet from 26-31 March.

XIV. The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff informs the Group South, the German Naval Command Italy, the Commander Submarines, Mediterranean on the condensed judgment of the General Staff of the Army on the situation in the South Eastern Areas from middle of March. Copy as per 1 SKL 9028/44 GKdos in War Diary Part D Book "Records on enemy situation."

XV. The Naval Intelligence Div./Naval Staff gave the summary on enemy situation No. 6/44 on 18 March. Copy as per 1 SKL 8905/44 GKdos in War Diary Part D Book "Summary on the enemy situation of the Naval Intelligence Division."

Situation 23 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to Intelligence report a camp convenient for 6000 Europeans and 50 000 Indians is built up in order to serve for pipeline-construction to the Mediterranean. In Abadan the Americans constructed an oil refinery and 26 piers for oiling. Six tankers of medium tonnage are lying at these piers. In Korramshahr the Americans constructed a

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berth with rail connection and store houses suitable for seven or eight approximately 10 000 BRT steamers.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group five planes at the 19th Group 48 planes were detected over the outer Gulf of Biscay. Seven British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

At 1458 our own air reconnaissance sighted four destroyers on alternating courses east of Plymouth and more to the South three destroyers heading Northwest. According to photographic reconnaissance one destroyer, nine LST, 21 big landing craft, four auxiliary landing craft, three freighters, 15 port and coastal vessels and others were lying in Falmouth.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Mine exploding vessels swept one mine in the inner Gironde River and four mines in the outer Gironde. The blocking of Gironde was released.

One entering submarine and three outgoing submarines were escorted.

Channel Area.

Two mines were swept in the area of Dunkerque. After suspended operation against CW-convoy the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas returned to Cherbourg again at 0015.

Further proceeding of the convoy "CHARLOTTE" from Calais to Dunkerque was suspended owing to dangerous minefield situation off Dunkerque.

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The convoy "BROMBERG" was carried through as planned from Jersey to Cherbourg. At 0150 four boats of the 18th Patrol-boat Flotilla proceeding from Boulogne to Dieppe were attacked by fighter-bombers with eight bombs. Light composition was floating on the water for about five minutes. Owing to curtain fire the fighter-bombers were prevented on aimed bombing. The group was not hurt. Brief report see Radiogram 1000.

During the night of 23 March execution of the convoy "CHARLOTTE" from Calais to Dunkerque and torpedo operations of the 2nd, 4th and 8th PT-boat Flotillas against southbound convoys is planned. The PT-boat Flotillas left at 2000 but suspended the operation at 2247 owing to increasingly bad visibility and returned.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

North Sea:

Escort-minesweeping and clearing duties were carried out with great effort. But during the night of 23 March it was curtailed owing to bad weather.

On 22 March ten mines were swept in Heligoland-Bight and river mouths, thereof three by minesweeping planes. The convoy 1233 Elbe - Hook weighed anchor at Helder Roads.

Seven convoys with approximately 62 000 BRT were carried through in the Zuider Zee and in Zealand waters.

One enemy plane was shot down at the Dutch Coast by naval anti-aircraft artillery and Naval Artillery Detachment.

Norway / Northern Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 32 planes were detected on missions. In the morning and in the afternoon some planes reported air raids on own convoys in AF 8496 or AN 3513 resp.

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2. Own Situation:

On 21 March the Coastal Anti-submarine Listening Station Nurmansetti located a submarine west of Petsamo - Approach.

The location was repeated on the evening of 22 March and on the morning of 23 March. Moreover, motor sounds were reported on the morning of 23 March in north-western direction by Vardoe battery.

On 23 March a well preserved Russian air mine was cut off Vardoe. In the afternoon busy flights with 17 planes into the area of Petsamo were reported. Shortly after noon two groups of eleven resp. twelve enemy planes were in the area of Stadlandet without trying to attack. At 0830 on 23 March one of our northbound convoys was attacked by 14 enemy planes with torpedoes and gunfire. The convoy was not damaged. The escort vessel shot down five planes even three of them were shot down by the convoy-leader. Patrol boat VP "5105" (Commander Chief Petty Officer Boehme, Willi).

At 1845 the single proceeding Norwegian packet steamer "RYFYLKE" (900 BRT) was attacked by two enemy planes off Lister and sprung a leak owing to bomb splinters. The ship was set aground. Salvaging of horses which are aboard the ship will be tried. One attacking plane presumably was shot down by antiaircraft artillery of Lister.

For the rest 29 northbound and 37 southbound ships were escorted.

No particular reports were submitted by the Admiral Northern Waters/Commander Submarines Norway.

The Naval Command Norway reports that the accentuating land situation at the Petsamo Front, the possibility of outflanking landing operations and the increasing enemy activity would make it necessary to operate with fast vessels which are suitable for fighter and reconnaissance task and asks for four PT-boats which should be sent off in the nick of time to the area of the Naval Shore Commander Kirkenes. But older PT-boats from the West Area would be suitable no more for this proposed operation. In event that allocation of PT-boats would be impossible, allocation of efficient motor minesweepers is requested.

The possibility of realization of this request will be checked.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

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On the evening of 22 March numerous enemy planes penetrated via Sylt into the western Baltic and Kiel Bay, presumably for minelaying.

By reason of Intelligence records the breaking-through of transport-PT-boat starting from Lysekil presumably could be assumed to be executed like this that the Skagerrak would be crossed during the night and in dawn the boats would appear in AN 3850. In so far as courses are known the route is going outside of the Naval Command's North area. At any rate, the declared area in the northern part will be crossed. Owing to its own lack of fast seagoing vessels to stop this breaking-through, the Naval Command North proposes to operate with our air forces during the time in question beginning from 23 March.

In the Gulf of Finland our boats were attacked with bombs and gunfire by groups of up to 20 planes.

Owing to Radio Monitoring seven war vessels (minesweeping) and 17 unidentified vessels were at sea in the Gulf of Finland on 22 March.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 34 boats and nine minesweeping planes, in the Baltic 27 boats and five minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. Vessels swept nine, and minesweeping planes eight mines in the Kattegat and in the western Baltic Sea. The mine-exploding vessel "27" was damaged by mine in AO 7487 however was kept afloat. Owing to mine one sailing ship sank in AO 7731.

Owing to mines convoys were not carried through in the Western Baltic. The following ships were escorted: in the Baltic Sea Entrances three transports with liberty men, with one escort ship and two hospital ships, in the area of the Commanding Admiral Eastern Defences six transports with two escort vessels between Hango and Danzig resp. vice versa and two transports, one tanker and two steamers.

For executing minelaying tasks in the Skagerrak the Naval Command East intends to operate with minelayers the "OSTMARK", the "ELSASS", the "KAISER" and two destroyers using them as mine carriers. At first the execution of barrage 23 is projected approximately on 28 March from Swinemuende. Time of operation approximately 14 days. Because the minelayer "KAISER" now operates in snagline trials at the Mining and Barrage Trials Command, the Naval Command East demands for decision if the Skagerrak tasks could be postponed until relief of the minelayer "BRUMMER" after executing her operation in the Gulf of Finland.

The Naval Staff decides that in the present situation of naval forces any references to the minelayer "KAISER" for urgent Skagerrak operation

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could not be avoided and put this ship at disposal for two weeks from 28 March.

Netlaying operations are carried through in the Gulf of Finland. Boats of the Narva patrol certainly shot down three attacking planes and one presumable plane. The Narva-Mouth and sea-side were reported to be free of ice, the Narva is melting.

Regarding the situation on the mainland the Admiral Baltic Countries reports that 14 strong enemy tank attacks against the 61 Infantry Division were repulsed between East and West Sack and attacks at Gorodenka and Lilienbach also.

V. Submarine Warfare.

No particular reports were submitted from the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

West Area.

By allowed free hunting in the Gulf of Biscay one Sunderland was shot down by one "Ju 88."

In forenoon, three air fields were attacked by gunfire in the Belgian and Northern French area. During the afternoon hours the railroad installations of Creil were raided with strong forces and serious damage was inflicted. Besides this, one airfield was attacked. In the afternoon the marshalling yard of Haine St. Pierre was attacked. Moreover several hundred fighter bombers and fighters dropped bombs in the area from Cambrai to the Somme. In Western France one airfield at Brest was attacked. Isolated planes attacked the Isle of Guernsey and enforced two of our own FW 190 to emergency landings on the isles in damaged condition.

During the night of 23 approximately 100 enemy penetrations into Belgium, North and West France were reported with unimportant harassing attacks resp. dropping of agents.

Shortly after midnight 16 of our own planes attacked London. One FW 190 is still missing.

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Reich Territory:

Several hundred planes with fighter cover attacked Braunschweig, Wolfenbuettel, Osnabrueck, Muenster and Handorf. In the air area 6 approximately 1000 high explosives and numerous incendiary bombs were dropped on 35 places. Three hundred and twenty seven of our own fighters operated in defence which according to reports up to now succeeded in shooting down 42 planes definitely and six ones presumably thereof, 49 were four-engined planes; 31 of our own planes were lost.

In the evening hours only isolated intruder planes were reported in the area of Braunschweig, Stendal and Siegen, Aachen.

Mediterranean Theater.

Moderate enemy reconnaissance activity was reported on 22 March from the area of the Air Force Command South East. In the area of the 2nd Air Force the enemy attacked Bologna, Verona as well as roads and traffic installations near Arezzo, port facilities in Leghorn and the railroad stations of Rimini and Ravenna during the day.

350 enemy planes were on missions in the front area and in the beach-head which operated in concentration on Cassino and for the rest attacked supply routes north of Rome.

Fifty enemy planes attacked the railroad station and airfield Padua during the night of 22 March.

Our own planes carried out reconnaissance missions.

Eastern Area.

On 22 March 1067 of our own and 510 enemy missions were carried out on the Eastern Front. Three of our own planes and 23 enemy ones were shot down.

Approximately 100 enemy planes attacked the patrol boats in the Narva-Bay without any result. Ship antiaircraft artillery shot down three planes.

Enemy air activity in the area of the 5th Air Force is already reported.

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VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Area of the Naval Group West.

Enemy Situation:

At 1850 on 23 March one CAIRO-class cruiser left Gibraltar Mediterranean bound.

Own Situation:

One convoy of 2020 BRT was carried through off the French South coast.

The strike of shipyard workers in Port de Bouc was finished in the afternoon of 22 March. In La Ciotat and Toulon the strike is lasting on. The objects are safeguarded by naval and infantry forces.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

The eastbound convoy consisting of more than 50 freighters which was reported north-west of Oran on 22 March will be estimated in dead reckoning on the morning of 24 March between Algiers and Bougie.

On the morning of 23 March our own air reconnaissance in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea and in the area of the isles of Corsica and Sardinia and on the Italian East Coast was badly detained owing to misty weather.

Normal traffic was observed in the area off the beachhead. Details see situation of the day.

At 0640, 15 medium-sized merchantmen with six escort vessels were sailing 60 miles south of Tarent heading North. At 0746 one convoy steering South-East and consisting of 32 freighters and three destroyers was sighted 130 miles southeast of Malta. At 0613 three thought to be destroyers and one torpedo boat were sailing north-west of Sidi Barani heading South.

At 0004 one PT-boat was sighted 14 miles west of Specia by one of our own minesweepers.

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Own Situation:

The minelaying operation "Huette" on the east coast of Corsica was carried out by four motor minesweepers with cover of reinforced patrol boat services in weather conditions limited to the utmost. Our own torpedo boats succeeded in diverting the enemy PT-boats. The motor minesweepers had had no contact with the enemy.

During the night of 22 March Italian MAS-boats entered St. Stefano.

At 1545 a bombing plot was made in Rome on one company of an SS Police formation which was marching through the town. Besides this, the company was fired on from behind houses so that 27 men were killed and 15 were injured.

At 0938 on 17 March the submarine U "371" reported the attack on a westbound convoy in CH 9566 with three observed hits on a steamer and on one transport of 8000 BRT each and of one hit on another steamer of 8000 BRT which was detected. One of the torpedoed freighters was sunk at 1350 by finishing shot. The boat was seriously damaged by depth charges and then chased during four days. The Commander Submarines Mediterranean assumes that two of the ships were sunk, one is torpedoed.

The Group North/Fleet advises the Operations Div./Naval War Staff with copy to the postponement of "Neger" operation of the Naval Special Operations Command because the air supply of the midget submarine has to be increased for the longer approach run.

The German Naval Command Italy advises the Naval Staff info. of the report to the Commanding General, Armed Forces South West that the light naval forces did not succeed in minelaying in the direct coastal forwarded area south of the Tiber-mouth on the 10 meter line and that the whole operation seems to be unaccomplishable because the boats in question are too slow and on their long approach would be exposed to the enemy air supremacy nearly without any protection even on day.

Trials of the execution on the spot with engineering equipment and midget vessels supplied from shore side had to be suspended because the operation with them is said to be impossible owing to the local conditions.

The last possibility may be the minelaying by the Air Force in the coastal forwarded area on the 10 meter line. For the purpose of this execution direct discussions between the 2nd Air Force and the Naval Command Italy were proposed.

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3. Area of the Naval Group South.

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

On the afternoon of 22 March enemy planes attacked the Isle of Hvar. At the same time one enemy group consisting of seven rather big units covered by planes and approaching from NNW shelled the southern coast of Hvar.

According to air reconnaissance the amount of small shipping in the ports of Comiza and Vis remained unchanged compared with 21 March.

No traffic was observed in the area between the islands.

Own Situation:

Two Siebel-ferries and one transport were sunk in the air raid against the NC-coast of the Isle of Paskan. In the fighter bomber raid on Infantry-boats one Infantry-boat was set afire off Trogir which however could be extinguished.

The 392d Infantry Division reported the conclusion of mopping-up operation on the isle of Raab.

The Commanding General Armed Forces South-West transmits that the oversea-supply required of the Army Group C to Benedetto amounting to 3500 tons monthly in supplying the Army High Command 10 only has been fulfilled in January with 1166 tons, in February with 638 tons, and in the first half of March with 482 tons. The continuous interruptions of the coastal railroad by enemy action will require further raising of the oversea supply to the highest efficiency in turn-over from Benedetto. The coastal motor sailing ships with the highest allowed draught of 2.5 m working in the shuttle-run Ancona - Benedetto are not sufficient, seriously depending on weather conditions, too slow and therefore in summer-months will only be suitable during the short nights. For this shuttle-run therefore the Commanding General Armed Forces South-West is asking for prior employment of naval landing craft coming from new constructions and transfer in order to supply the Southern Front.

Relevant decision has already been made by the Quartermaster Division.

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b. Aegean

Nothing to report.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring three submarines were at sea in the operational area and a 4th one presumably on approach to it. In the afternoon one PT-boat and one motor gun boat was recognized on the central east coast and one PT-boat in the south eastern Black Sea.

Own Situation:

Nothing particular happened at the patrol-line in Kerch-Straits and in the Dnieper-Liman during the night of 22 March. During the night of 23 March both the patrol lines are occupied with three naval landing craft each.

In Nicolaev the floating elevator and the Naval Victualling Depot were blown up.

In the forenoon the submarine U "9" left Constanța for war cruise.

Owing to weather conditions the Crimea convoy temporarily was delayed.

The Chief of Sea Transportation of the Admiral Black Sea reports that the following tonnage was asked for the month of April in the operational discussion on transportation with the Army Group Command A on 13 March:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a. Danube - Crimea | 34 000 tons capacity |
| b. Odessa - Danube - Crimea | 15 111 tons capacity
of lighter facilities. |
| c. Constanța - Odessa -
Crimea | 9 000 tons capacity
tanker facilities. |
| d. Constanța - Danube -
Odessa | 26 000 tons capacity
ships and lighter facilities. |

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Referring to the points a., b. and c. the Chief of Sea Transportation promised full capacity and referring d. 6000 tons capacity ships facilities and 15 000 tons capacity lighter facilities. Additionally to that prospectively the transport of 4500 tons of OT-fuel for the army from Georgia to Odessa would be necessary in April.

According from overheard Radio communications between the Admiral Black Sea and the Group South there was recognized the intention of the Admiral Black Sea to transfer his Headquarters from Simferopol to Carmen Sylva.

In earlier times the Group South already gave its consent to this change, but at this time considers it necessary - very pastly - as to military and psychological matters to stay at Simferopol with the Headquarters of the Admiral Black Sea and the Operations Staff.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

In connection with the Finnish / Russian negotiations the USA-magazine World-Telegraph states that Moscow's policy of expansion already would have created tensions between Russia on the one and the USA and Great Britain on the other hand. If Stalin would occupy parts of Romania, Poland and of the Baltic States and would involve Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in the Romanian sphere of interests and even wants to convert Finland into a marionette, so little hope would be given for a lasting time of peace. Only Germany and Japan would win if Helsinki and Moscow could not reach a compromise at present.

According to a Reuter report from Washington, the secretary of State Hull declared that the negotiations between Russia and Finland would not yet be broken off finally.

Subject to alternation the Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff forwards a report of the German embassy of Stockholm from 14 March on alleged being taken ill of Stalin. Copy as per 1./SKL 10707/44 Secret in War Diary Part B Volume V.

From his inspecting journey to Gotenhafen the Commander in Chief, Navy returned to Headquarters.

No conference on the situation.

Special Items:

I. Concerning the operation Tanne:

a. As the supply of personnel from Norway is coming too late the Naval Command East and the Admiral Netherlands receive the directive from the Quartermaster Division to form up the battery-compliments of Scheveningen North for "Tanne" in such a manner and to fill them up to 170 men eventually by exchanging men with other batteries that with them four coastal batteries could be manned in skeleton manner. Personnel has to be sent off in due time that it would be ready for loading in Danzig in the morning at 0800 on D-day minus three days.

b. Regarding the operation of ships of the Training Unit for firing on land targets. The Group North/Fleet reports, that besides the heavy cruiser PRINZ EUGEN and the SCHEER also the cruiser NUERNBERG

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and the EMDEN would come in question provided that sufficient cover by destroyers and torpedo boats could be furnished. The battleship SCHLESIIEN and SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN are dissuaded from participation.

The Naval Staff is directing that additionally the cruisers NUERNBERG and EMDEN would be put at the Naval Command's East disposal. Copy of the draught as per 1/SKL I op 317/44 GKdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C, Volume III.

c. On 24 March the Daily Telegraph published a report from Stockholm according to which German troops are going to occupy the Aland Islands. German troop transports should have already arrived at Marihamn[?]. This precaution would mean no surprise to the Allied circles in Stockholm, where one is waiting for any proof of more intimate Finnish/German cooperation since the breakoff of the peace negotiations.

II. a. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff Navy informs the Operations Division Naval Staff that in Hungary the movements passed on as planned and all crossings of Thisza-River were occupied. On the German side no new decisions are still made. The Naval Liaison considers it possible that it would be necessary to disarm the Honved-Forces in the home area and proposes adequate personnel preparations of the Navy for taking charge of the Hungarian Danube-Forces. On the evening of 24 March the Marshall Antonescu will be expected to arrive at the Fuehrer's Headquarters.

b. At discussions with fortress commanders of the West Area complaints were expressed saying that serious difficulties are existing with the Navy about calling-up watches, especially this would be the case in Brest, Lorient and St. Nazaire. In spite of high numbers of men the Navy refuses to participate in the guards which are assisting to joint tasks such as railroad station guards etc. according to its share. Also floating groups lying in harbor for longer time refuse energetically to call up guards, though they would be able to do so according to their strength. These conditions would have to be stopped at any case.

c. Then Naval Liaison is continuing reporting that today the Fuehrer has decided in the question of the transfer of the replacement training units that by interest of defense operations which may occur in event of invasion, the transfer of certain vessels would already be necessary at this time. But the actual fighting in event of invasion will depend on the Fuehrer's decision. The Naval Liaison thoroughly explained the doubts of the Navy and the opinion of the Commander in Chief, Navy. But despite this, the Fuehrer is believing that he must insist on his desire. Corresponding directive of the Armed Forces Operations Staff will follow.

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The two subjects mentioned above were transmitted by the Operations Division/Naval Staff to the Quartermaster Division/Naval Staff with the request to procure for further arrangements and inform the Naval Liaison in correspondence to that.

Regarding the transfer of the Naval Drafting Detachments lying in France which was applied for by the Commanding General, Armed Forces West to the Armed Forces Operations Staff, the Commander of the German Occupation Forces in France still took his detailed judgment.

Considering the particular importance of the defense of the emergency routes for holding the coastal front the Commander in Chief, Navy is requested to examine his decision according to the proposal of the Commanding General Armed Forces, West.

Copy of relevant Radiogram as per 1 SKL 9049/44 GKdos. in War Diary Part C filing "Enemy large scale landing operations".

d. For a new time the Fuehrer mentioned the urgent demand to carry off the 130.000 tons of olive oil which obviously are stored at Crete and other Aegean isles and import them to the German food production.

The Naval Group South, the Commanding Admiral Aegean were informed of this matter and were asked for judgment and report of their plannings.

III. The Group South advises the Operations Division/Naval Staff with copy of the repeated emphatic appeal to the Army Group F that the occupation of the Dalmatian Islands respectively capture was not demanded for its own interest but only was caused by sorrows for further execution of sea supply and economic traffic urgently needed by the Armed Forces (bauxite). But beyond this, the isles being in own possession are the best defense of the mainland coast. In further occupation of the Dalmatian isles the Navy sees the decisive supposition for successful holding of the Balkans Area.

This advice was necessary because the Army desired a thinning up in the occupation of the southern Dalmatian Isles and according to report of the Admiral Adriatic all the Army officials which are shared in, are remarkably disinterested and already reflect upon their so-called evacuation. Copy of relevant Radiogram 1./SKL 9183/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

IV. Considering the judgment of the situation of the Admiral Northern Waters/Commander (Submarines) Norway (see War Diary 23 March) the

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Group North takes its assessment as follows:

1. "In regard to the increasing enemy air activity in connexion with Northern Waters convoys, the fitting out of the Submarines with 3.7 cm guns is said to be urgently necessary. Therefore the request of the Admiral Northern Waters/Commander Submarines Norway is supported.

2. But even with mounted 3.7 cm guns it seems to be doubtful, if the enemy air force could be fought in so far that free surface operations in the sense of the Admiral North/Commander Submarines Norway would be possible.

3. The most favorable opportunity of operations the Group North/Fleet sees in a system half depending on stationed vessels, that is to say, to dispose of the boats at first in a stationed and deeply distributed submerged position and then after being passed over to advance the submarines' position, in order to bring the submarines in surface cruising to a new stationed position far distant from the convoy.

During weather conditions which will not allow operations of the air force, also free operations in the former manner to reduce actions of the enemy air force would become necessary if need be, by proceeding in hauling ahead within shelter of the Norwegian coast and within the range of our own fighters. Calling up of our fighter cover in the manner of free hunting must be desirable hereby.

4. Increased equipment of the Submarines with T 5-torpedoes* for fighting down the very strong convoy escort will be necessary, as soon as the supply situation will allow this.

5. The question which of the operational proceedings would be the best for this purpose, practical work must show. However supporting the submarines by the Air Force in fighting the enemy air force or in direct attack against carriers and convoys will improve the submarines' prospects of success incisively, which otherwise in long lasting clearness will be seriously restricted."

V. The Naval Staff transmits the directive of the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff concerning the operation of the remote controlled platoon of the coastal chasseurs detachment of Division Brandenburg against ship targets in the beachhead of Nettuno to the German Naval Command Italy and Group North. (See War Diary 23 March).

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VI. With date of 8 Feb. the Admiral Norway requested to lay the whole area of the Skagerrak east of Kristiansand South and approximately south of the line Lille Faerder-Struten into one person's hand, that is to say, in that of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses Baltic. Up to now a strip of 5 miles width off the Norwegian South Coast to the Oslo Fiord and Kristiansand South belonged to the area of the Naval Command Norway. Within the framework of decisions on the organization of command in the area of Denmark-South Norway this question has also been settled. The decision which was issued by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff on 23 March runs as follows:

"In regard to the development of the situation which charges the area of Southern Norway/Skagerrak/Juteland into directly threatened areas and in pursuance of the directives given in the above mentioned draught, concentration of the command coast/coastal forwarded area is ordered for this area.

In Details:

A. Forthwith the 8th Coast Patrol Force has to be formed up.

1. Place of set up: Aarhus

2. Attached groups: Referring to distribution of forces by the High Command, Navy Operations Division/Naval Staff (according to proposal of the Naval Command East in accordance with the Naval Command North and Group North/Fleet).

3. Subordination: as to military matters under the Commanding Admiral, Defenses Baltic, as to operational matters referring to
B. 3. b.

4. Operational Area: Area off the western coast of Jutland from the German-Danish frontier to the North up to Cape Lindesnes (with the restriction, that the convoys from the Heligoland Bight to Esbjerg and vice versa should remain the task of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses North), Skagerrak, Kattegat, Baltic Sea Entrances up to the Southern outlet of the Sound and Belts (the existing five miles limit off southern Norwegian coast is suspended).

B. The Admiral Denmark is changed in "The Admiral Skagerrak" (Commanding Admiral Skagerrak). He will be Sea and Mainland Commander in Chief with Headquarters in Aarhus.

1. Subordination: Under the Naval Chief East (subordination of the western coast under the Naval Command North is suspended). Nothing is changed in the relations of subordination towards Commanding General, Armed Forces, Denmark referring to the Fuehrer directive 50.

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2. Operational Area: Waters like A. 4., Jutland, Danish Isles and Bornholm.

3. Naval Forces will be subordinated as follows:

a. Naval Forces of the Fleet:

as to operational matters distribution of forces by the Naval Staff or the Group North/Fleet.

b. 8th Coast Patrol Force: as to operational matters: (at operations in the Skagerrak the concentration of which is lying in the Norwegian area the subordination under the Naval Chief Norway can be ordered by the Naval Group North or the Naval Staff.)

c. Mainland Forces: fully (referring to War Organization)

4. In order to discharge the Admiral Skagerrak on the mainland sector the Coastal Sector Commanders and the Naval Shore Commander are entrusted with the command of their areas to full extent.

5. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses Baltic passes the command as to operational matters of the coastal patrol forces in the area of the Admiral Skagerrak (8th Coastal Patrol Force) over to this one; for the rest he will maintain his now existing tasks.

C. 1. The distribution of forces and directives concerning personnel matters will be issued separately.

2. The Naval Command East is charged with the execution and reports in accordance with the Naval Command North and with agreement of the Group North/Fleet the moment in which the ordered precautions are becoming effective.

D. 1. In the moment the above mentioned changes of organizations are becoming effective the following modifications in limits of the areas are coming into force:

a. Limit between the Group West and Group North/Fleet:

From the Dutch-Belgian frontier up to the point 53° 0' North, 3° 16' East like now existing, from there true North up to the 55th degree of Latitude North, from there true West up to the British Coast.

b. Limit between the Naval Chief North and the Naval Chief East:

In the Reich Territory like now existing, then along the German-Danish frontier to the West in direction of 55° North up to the limit of area

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Group West and Group North/Fleet. (The isles of Sylt belong in the whole to the Naval Command North).

c. Limit between the Naval Command East and the Naval Command Norway:

From Cape Lindesnes in direction of 190° 20 miles, from there to the West to the Scotch coast.

2. The chart "Limits of naval areas" will be corrected in relevant manner.

VII. The Intelligence Division/Naval Staff informs the highest Naval Command Headquarters of the enemy situation. Copy corresponding to Radiogram as per 1/SKL 9045/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume "Records on the enemy situation". Concerning the area of Great Britain therein is stated, that the impression of quickly increasing readiness for jumping-off from the area of Southern England and presumably also from the eastern Scotland is strengthening and that among the masses of informations concerning the projects of the enemy and besides multiple reports on further postponing of the beginning of landing operations the date and of March/beginning of April is revealing more often during the last time.

Situation 24 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Following the Radio Monitoring a striking shift of the Allied single route shipping from the Pacific Ocean to the North Atlantic was recognized in the beginning of March. While the total number of detected Allied merchantmen in the Pacific Ocean sank to 40% it was increasing in the Northern Atlantic to 85%. At least twelve single running freighters received the directive to transfer in ballast from the Southern Pacific through the Panama Canal to the East.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

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II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group 13, at the 19th Group were 59 aircraft detected on mission. Seven British vessels were located in the rendezvous area.

The British Admiralty announced the loss of the frigate GOULD.

The Intelligence Division transmits the report of a well tried agent who reported the threatening attack on North Africa in right time, saying that before long landing operations temporary drawn up in echelons will begin at the Western and Northern French coast, as well at the Belgian and southern French coast, but presumably also at the Dalmatian coast.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Two mines were swept in the Gironde mouth, at further position not yet reported two mines were swept.

On the approach route one enemy fighter was shot down by the 7th Patrol Boat Flotilla.

Channel Area:

Mines were swept as scheduled: in the area of Ostende-Dunkerque 18, east of Dunkerque three, in the area east of Le Havre 15.

During the night of 23 Mar. the convoy CHARLOTTE was carried out from Calais to Dunkerque. On this execution the 15th Patrolboat Flotilla and the 2nd Gun Carrier Flotilla happened to be engaged with enemy PT-boats and fighter bombers. Two enemy PT-boats are definitely and a third one is thought to be sunk. Aboard our own boats only small casualties occurred. Brief report of the Commander of the 2nd Gun Carrier Flotilla see Radiogram 0740, 15th Patrolboat Flotilla see Radiogram 0730.

Further transfer of CHARLOTTE from Dunkerque to Flushing is planned during the morning hours of 25 Mar. and has already started.

During the night of the 25 March the proceeding of the convoy steamer BROMBERG from Cherbourg to Le Havre is projected and the torpedo

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operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas from Cherbourg against the Westbound convoy in Plymouth-Bay has been started. During the night, the 4th and 5th Torpedo-boat Flotillas are carrying out mine-laying operation from Cherbourg. Details not yet submitted.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

The convoy, minesweeping and clearing duties were carried out under strong effort of the forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses North.

Eight mines were swept off the Dutch coast and in the Heligoland Bight.

At 1300 the convoy 488 Elbe-Hook consisting of eight steamers has been started. The convoy 1233 Hook-Elbe is going to be concluded. 54752 BRT were escorted in the Zealand Waters.

According to wireless interception report and Radar interception of the Air Force, enemy PT-boats were sailing off Ymuiden on the evening of 24 Mar.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 25 planes were detected in the northern North Sea. At 1235 one Russian reconnaissance plane reported one of our own convoys in the Persfiord.

2. Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 23 March unimportant exchange of gunfire took place in the area of Petsamo.

Thirty-six penetrating planes were observed in the area of the Polar Coast.

At 0830 one of our northbound convoys was attacked in vain by enemy submarine in AF 6488 (Foldafiord). In contrary to that, at 1008 another enemy submarine sunk the Norwegian packet steamer NORF-NORGE (991 BRT) off Stadlandet. One survivor was rescued.

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At 1315 a new submarine attack occurred against one of our southbound convoys consisting of four tankers, two steamers, one catapult ship with ten escort vessels, reinforced air cover and submarine chasers. The tanker WORTH (6652 BRT) and the catapult ship SCHWABENLAND (8 631 BRT) were torpedoed and towed in to Flekkefiord.

Casualties are suffered on both the ships.

For the rest 27 northbound and 38 southbound ships were escorted.

Three submarines left Narvik for operation. The boats are set up in two groups, "Thor" and "Hammer".

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 35 boats and four minesweeping planes, in the Baltic Sea 21 boats and four minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. On 23 Mar. nine mines were swept in Kiel Bay and in Fehmarn-Belt. On 24 Mar. six mines were swept in the same areas. In both the days in total 32 mines were swept. The blocked routes were released again.

On the evening of 24 Mar. the Sperrbrecher "132" was damaged by mine.

In the Baltic Sea Entrances and in the area of the Commander (mine-sweepers) East the convoys were carried through without incidents.

At noon several enemy reconnaissance planes penetrated into the area of Kiel Bay - Small Belt - Aarhus - Aalborg up to Skagen.

The Commander of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla has carried out exercises with destroyers Z "28," "35" and "39" northwest of Padilski [Baltiiski Port?].

Two tenders of the netlaying group were rammed by a steamer in Tallinn and sunk. Moreover, netlaying is curtailed owing to bad weather conditions.

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The Commander of the 24th Landing Flotilla planted his share of buoys with antisweeping cutter on the barrage Seeigel B₄ with three naval landing craft and two motor minesweepers.

Owing to bad weather, the patrol of the Narva Bay partially has to seek shelter leeward the coast. Enemy air raids which were carried through continuously inflicted no break downs.

Regarding the situation on the mainland, the Admiral Baltic States reports that on 23 Mar. the enemy did not start his large scale attack against the 16th and 18th Army. Further changes were recognized which were shelled busily by our guns.

V. Merchant-Shipping:

The Naval Intelligence Division/Naval Staff reports on the shipping to Goeteborg 1943 with prospects to 1944. Copy of the report as per 1/SKL 1133⁴/₄₄ Geh. in War Diary Part C Book XI.

VI. Submarine Warfare:

On 24 Mar. at 0654, the submarine U "302" sighted a fast little convoy heading North in BE 7173 and sank one destroyer with Zaunkoenig* torpedo.

The submarine U "843" (Monsun-boat) has been fully supplied by the U "488" and continued its proceeding to the South. The submarine U "801" did not arrive at the meeting point. The submarine U "123," U "1059" and U "801" are to be supplied at the new meeting point.

VII. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

Approximately 300 enemy planes penetrated into Belgium/Northern France and attacked the airfield of Creil, and the airfield of Beaumont. 50 enemy planes were reported in Western France, in the sea and coastal area of Fécamp and St. Brieux, they did not attack.

Towards noon, several 100 enemy bombers escorted by fighter cover attacked the airfield of St. Dizier. A number of planes has been destroyed or damaged. More 90 aircraft attacked the airfield of

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Berney. Owing to bad weather our own fighter defense was not effective.

During the night of 24 March 75 enemy flights into Belgium/Northern France and the Netherlands were reported with harassing attacks on various airfields without noticeable damage, approximately 200 enemy flights in Western France into the areas of Chartres-Chateaudun - Le Havre - Morlaix without attacks were reported, presumably dropping agents.

From the South 25 enemy penetrations into the area of Toulouse took place without attacks. 143 of our own planes were sent out for attacking London, of which 121 could recognize the good effect of the attack over the target. Sixteen planes were lost.

Reich Territory:

During the hours of noon, isolated planes did reconnaissance in direction to Belfort-Schaffhausen and left towards Switzerland and the Kiel-Bay. In the morning, one group of several 100 enemy planes presumably with fighter cover penetrated into the area of Frankfort-on-the-Main and Mainz. A medium-sized attack was carried out on Frankfort-on-the-Main and as well attacks on country districts north of Schweinfurt and single bomb droppings in the area of Mannheim and Mainz. In Frankfort the Central Observer Post was destroyed by direct hit, thus burying numerous men.

During the night of 25 Berlin was raided by many hundreds of enemy planes concentrated on the south-western and southern areas of the town which was said to be very serious. According to statements up to now, damage on industry and casualties are not immoderately high. Further details see situation of the day.

Further bombing is reported from Weimar, Langensalza, Kiel and List. Our own results in defense were not yet reported.

Mediterranean Theater:

During the night of 22 March, 22 Ju "88"'s of the 2nd Air Force did minelaying in the waters off the beachhead and carried out attacks against ship targets. The observation during the evening which was executed two hours after the attack revealed heavy fires at sea and numerous explosions, presumably deriving from rather big ships.

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On 23 Mar. moderate enemy reconnaissance activity was reported in the Aegean and at the Dalmatian-Albanian coast. Coming from the area of Foggia, 40 enemy planes penetrated up to Agram via Sibenice without executing attacks.

In the Italian area 250 fighter bombers and fighters were observed in the front areas and beachhead concentrated on Cassino. For the rest of Florence, transport installations in the area of Ancona and the railroad station of Pontassieve near Florence were attacked.

During the night of 23 March, 36 Ju "88"'s attacked the town and harbor of Vis and recognized good bombing in the town and port area. Two planes were lost. On the afternoon of 24 Mar. reconnaissance flights were done in the southern Italian area.

Eastern Area:

On 23 Mar. 817 own and 380 enemy missions were counted. One own plane was lost and ten planes were shot down.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 23 Mar. one CAIRO-class cruiser and one destroyer left Gibraltar, Mediterranean bound. At 1630 on 24 March five freighters with four corvettes passed the Gibraltar Straits with course to the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

One convoy of 2012 BRT was carried through off the French south coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy.

Enemy Situation:

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At 0335 a convoy of ten or 15 ships was sailing 15 miles east of Algiers while at 0521 two ships were recognized 20 miles north-west of Bougie according to air reconnaissance.

Owing to weather conditions, our own reconnaissance in the coastal forwarded area was curtailed in the area of Civitavecchia up to Capri in the morning. Normal landing supply was recognized in the area of Nettunia.

In the morning six large, one medium-sized and several small vessels were lying in the Pozzuoli-Bay.

According to Radio Monitoring, the Swedish Red-Cross Ship HALLAREN was ineffectively attacked at 1754 by British planes 35 miles North-East of Ancona. At 1930 Algiers transmitted SOS-reports from the same position.

Supplementary to the commando raid on Pianosa on 19 Mar. is reported that at dawn four or six vessels carrying 80 - 100 Badoglio Italians and some De Gaullists were landing, penetrated into the house of correction and then embarked again taking with them 41 inmates and guards. Short engagement took place with one of our own infantry platoons.

During the night of 22 Mar. Pianosa was supplied by two of our battle landing craft. At 1040 on 23 March two landing craft tried a new commando raid against Pianosa but shoved off to the West after having encountered gunfire.

Between 0927 - 1430 on 24 Mar. six large motor mine sweepers with several smaller vessels were sighted six miles south west of Pianosa doing mine sweeping. At 1445 three of these vessels shelled Pianosa. Then the group went off to the West.

Own Situation:

On 23 Mar. shuttle run was curtailed owing to bad weather conditions. During the night of 24 March, patrol duties were carried out as planned. Owing to bad weather, minesweeping on own barrages had to be suspended.

At 2355 on 23 Mar., enemy PT-boats were recognized off Cape Mele south-west of Genoa which attacked one of our own convoys according to sounding and Radar interception with torpedoes.

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During the same night, four motor minesweepers returning from mine-laying operation west of Monte Christo were attacked twice with double spread salvos from behind the isles by two PT-boats. During the night of 24 Mar. the operation of one Italian PT-boat off the beach-head is planned.

In expiating the bombing plot against the SS-Police-Battalion in Rome, 328 Italians were shot.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

During the night of 22 Mar. another enemy landing operation in unknown strength took place on the NW-coast of Hvar under cover of gunfire. The German occupation force of the isle is engaged with the landed enemy. On 23 Mar. two Inf-boats with one fighting group aboard put out to Hvar.

On 23 March our own troops were landing on Solta and did not find any enemy resistance up to noon.

At 1620 on 22 Mar. 18 enemy fighter bombers attacked three Inf-boats in the Salden-Bay near Trogir and the antiaircraft positions of Ciova with bombs. One attacking plane definitely was shot down, two more are thought to be.

On the morning of 21 March two Siebel ferries were sunk in the air raid on the isle of Pasman which were laden with guns. The guns are going to be salvaged by experts.

b. Aegean:

Nothing to report.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 1545 one submarine was located 95 miles north-west of Sevastopol.

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Radio Monitoring detected vessels during the night of 23 Mar. as follows: in the Azov Sea two PT-boats, off the central Caucasian coast one PT-boat and one minesweeper, off the southern Caucasian coast two unknown small vessels. Six submarines were observed at sea. On the evening of 24 Mar. one motor gun boat and one armoured boat and one PT-boat were sailing in the Azov Sea according to Radio Monitoring.

Own Situation:

At 0935 three enemy gun boats sailing five miles NE of Cape Takil were shelled by one of our own Naval battery without noticing the effect. The Russian aerial railway across the Kerch Straits was set out of action by Army gunfire.

The submarine "U 20" began her homeward proceeding to Constanța from the operational area.

Intercepting the Radio traffic in the Black Sea, the answer of the Army Group A to the Chief of Sea transportation of the Admiral Black Sea was overheard. According to that, the Crimea supply for April will be reduced to 27000 tons of supply and 8200 tons of fuel, thereof coming from Romanian ports to Crimea 21000 tons of supply, 7000 tons of fuel and from Odessa to Crimea 6000 tons of supply and 1200 tons of fuel.

In thinning up Odessa 45800 tons have to be carried to Romanian ports in the time from 1 - 20 April.

Copy of the relevant Radiogram which also contains operational intentions of the Admiral Black Sea - Chief of Sea transportation in details as per l/Skl 9087/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume XIV a.

Besides this, the Admiral Black Sea - Chief of Sea Transportation reported to the Coastal Defense Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff that the Commanding General of the 17th Army agrees with the reduction of supplies to Crimea up to monthly 35000 tons dead weight so long as the battle situation Crimea would allow this. The Army Group A will maintain the 17th Army to the same amount of supply in so far as railroad supply would allow.

IX. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy:

I. Oral report of the Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff on the report of the Naval Command Norway concerning the performances in patrol duties. After having discussed the fundamental reasons of the practically superior efficiencies of the British search devices, the Commander in Chief, Navy orders examination if not similar personnel precautions would be suitable just as the British are executing, where the Asdic personnel is forming a special branch, which is currently trained and remains embarked on the same ship for years. Owing to continuous changes, a higher level of experiences never could be obtained with us. This instigation would be followed up by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

II. Within the frame of the report on the Adriatic, the Commander in Chief, Navy, once more directs the attention to the capture of Lissa. Hence, the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff declares that owing to lack of naval forces the execution of this task would only be possible with concentration of the German Air Force.

III. Lecture of the Chief of Auxiliary merchants cruiser section, Operations Division Naval Staff on the situation in the Far East. While the Japanese is succeeding locally, evidently important results at Manipur in Burma, his situation in the area of the isles is difficult. The USA-enemy systematically cuts Japanese forwarded positions by means of outflanking landing operations. At this moment the Japanese Admiralty Staff judges the situation in Micronesia more hopeful according to a report of the Armed Forces Attache in Tokyo from 25 March.

One is not understanding the reason why the Americans did not follow up after having raided Truk in the middle of February and landed on Saipan and Tinian, what hardly could have been prevented at this time. In meantime, Truk has been supplied sufficiently again, so that landing operations on the Marian Islands would be a great risk. Predominantly at this time, the enemy air force attacks the targets Ponape, Wake and the Japanese possession of the Marshall Islands. Besides this, weak attacks are carried out against Truk with land based plans,

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evidently coming from the Marshall Islands. A large scale attack is expected on Marcus.

In Melanesia at New Guinea, rests of the Japanese Division which was shoved off from Finchhafen were received near Medang. The front-line now is running 50 kilometres east of this place. Enemy landing operations are expected west of Wewak which concerning to be main base is being raided seriously every day.

The Japanese activity at Bougainville may be valued as the attempt of troops fighting on forlorn hope for relieving the situation of Rabaul. Now the Americans landed also on Marcus (Admiralty Islands).

Up to now eleven enemy airfields were recognized on Kiska and Atta. Every day, enemy air reconnaissance was observed over the northern Kurile Islands. Evidently an attempt of landing is planned on these isles.

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval War Staff reports on the new directives of the Armed Forces High Command which became effective by the Fuehrer's decisions in occasion of the last report of the Commander in Chief, Navy in the Fuehrer's Headquarters on 21 March.

Regarding the directive concerning the powers of the fortress commanders, the Quartermaster General and the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff arose doubts to the last sentence cypher 1. (see War Diary 23 March especially cypher V), saying that naval forces suitable for fighting outside the fortress have to comply with the demands of the fortress commands within the bounds of their orders and tactical possibilities. The Commander in Chief, Navy, is not intending to undertake any interference in this matter.

The directive of the Armed Forces High Command concerning the action of naval shore detachments in defense operations in event of enemy landing operations runs the following wording:

"The Fuehrer has ordered:

1. The replacement and training units of the Navy stationed in the area of Epinal and Belfort have to be transferred into the area of the railroad Metz-Paris according to the desires and preparations of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West.

2. With regard to the demands of further naval warfare, the employment of replacement, training and special duties detachments and schools of the Navy in the occupied areas and in the home area for

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defense operations outside of their barracks in event of enemy landing operations, will be saved to the order of the Fuehrer. In event of direct enemy danger to their location of quarters, they have to be put in action for local defense without this order.

3. The Navy will make relevant preparations for the employment of these groups as Naval Emergency units. As to standard of mobilization, the Commanding Generals or the Commanding Generals, resp. Armed Forces will prepare the employment in correspondence to the level of training and equipment.

4. The directives being in contrary to this order have to be corrected."

The Commander in Chief, Navy agrees with this wording.

Concerning the complaints which had come in about the lacking willingness of the Navy to participate in the calling-up of guard troops in the West Area, the Commander in Chief, Navy orders that a solution between the Services has to be found by reason of suitable agreement. Naturally, the Navy has to help equably in executing this kind of task. Certainly the necessities of the seagoing personnel must be preserved.

Furthermore, the Quartermaster General reports that the question of olive-oil in the southeastern area, which was mentioned by the Fuehrer, has been taken in hand in connection with the ministry of food.

The Romanians tried to confiscate lighters for employment in the Danube respectively for purpose of evacuation.

The request of the German Naval Command, Italy for mobile anti aircraft artillery can not be answered.

After concluding exercises, the heavy cruiser PRINZ EUGEN has to undergo 14 days shipyard staying in executing boiler repairs.

In Esthonia one oil factory (Sillamae) has to be evacuated owing to the neighbourhood of the front. The monthly deficit comes to 1000 tons.

V. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division:

The news of the occupation of the Aland Islands by German troops which were spread in London have been denied in Helsinki.

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Some Hungarian Foreign missions, among them Stockholm broke with the Government Stojay.

VI. By Japanese arrangement, one captured British report of the Admiralty from December 41 concerning the anti-submarine warfare has come into our possession which contains precious details which are still being evaluated. Among others, the report contains authentic numbers of vessels sunk by our submarines and the numbers of losses of the Allied merchant shipping as well.

In a highly restricted circle:

VII. The Naval Liaison Officer in Vichy submitted a judgment on the personalities of French Admirals. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff's opinion is that this judgment looks at the matter from one point of view only and here a task is existing which has to be executed by the Group West. Further details contained in War Diary Part C Volume VIII.

VIII. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff reports of improvement in instructing the destroyers and torpedo-boats. The fuel which is required will be put at disposal. The Training Flotilla too is in preparation. A training detachment will not be set up because this would require particular demand of personnel. The Commander in Chief, Navy puts at consideration whether an installation in the area of the Commander, Destroyers would not be suitable, similar to that of the Bureau of personnel, Submarines.

Special Items.

I. The Naval Command North, with copy to the Group North/Fleet is informed, that the Commander in Chief, Navy reported to the Fuehrer on the conditions of the coastal fortifications of the Heligoland Bight and that the Fuehrer demonstrated his intention to transfer manpower and materiel for construction of the Heligoland Bight after having concluded the first construction of the Atlantic Fortifications in the beginning of summer 1944.

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II. Investigations of prisoners of war are revealing that the British dispose of three kinds of follow-up torpedoes* which also are used in fighting submerged submarines. The searching-torpedo* "Oskar" is two meters long, holding 70 cm in diameter, approximately 23 miles speed and is weighing 450 kilograms. Allegedly 80% hits were obtained with it.

Our own traceless torpedo is known to the enemy by captured pieces from Sicily.

Under good weather conditions the ranges of Radar sets installed in planes are announced to be against an emerged submarine under way 50 miles, lying stopped 15 miles, against a telescope under way 15 miles, lying stopped five miles, against a destroyer under way with 40 miles, lying stopped 15 miles, against a passenger steamer under way 80 miles, lying stopped with 40 miles. Floating barrels and parts of wreckage are to be detected from about 15 miles. A small sailing ship with sails, already can be detected in 30 miles and without sails in a distance of 20 miles. Carley floats never do appear on the screen not even then when they could be recognized with the naked eye. The marks specified for good weather conditions would be reduced in bad weather to 2/3. Under water locations are not possible to make with the Radar set but however allegedly since May 1943 a set especially constructed for that purpose is to be available. The Radar set can be interfered but evidently however we did not use this possibility since autumn 1943.

III. Referring to Fuehrer order from 27 Nov. the Naval High Command/Recruitment Division reports to the Chief, Armed Forces High Command, that in the area of the Navy 22 825 men are cut. There off 17 721 fall to the first and second date, 5104 men to the third.

IV. Corresponding to the directive of the Fuehrer on 21 Mar. the "Remarks of the Commander in Chief, Navy on the importance of Odessa for the warfare in the South East" are transmitted to the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, Navy, the Naval Liaison Officer to the High-Command, Army General Staff, Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff, Chief of Naval Liaison Staff and the Admiral in the Fuehrer's Headquarters. Copy 1/Skl Ib 921/44 GKdos. Chfs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

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Situation 25 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Staff, Operations Division informs the Armed Forces High Command/Foreign Countries III and the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division Supply and Fuel Branch of the loss of the tanker CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN and BRAKE. Copy of the writing 1/Skl Ik 8748/44 GKdos in War Diary Part C Volume I.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group were twelve, at the 19th Group there were 42 planes detected on mission. Eight British vessels and one Allied vessel were located in the rendez-vous area. Besides this, four wireless telegraphic guards were detected escorting convoys resp. groups in the areas BE and AM.

At 0906 our own air reconnaissance reported two destroyers on southerly course 300 miles west of the Gironde.

According to information of the Foreign Office from Lisbon, the Chief of the Portuguese Counter Intelligence Service is expecting a large Allied landing at the Belgian coast before 9 Apr. which however would only be delay-operation because the main blow would occur in the vicinity of Toulon.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast

Both, one mine was swept in the Gironde mouth and west of Bayonne.

The transfer of BODENSEE to Royan has been executed as planned.

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At 0930 the submarine escort of the subdivision of Patrolboat "604" proceeding homeward was attacked by six four-engined enemy planes and six Mosquitoes on the 50 m line.

The submarine U "976" was sunk by aircraft gunfire. The crew has been rescued by the patrol-boat. Casualties were suffered aboard the patrol boats.

Channel Area:

During the night of 24 Mar. the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas did not encounter the enemy on their advanced thrust against the West-convoy in Plymouth Bay, presumably due to an error of reckoning. All the boats entered Cherbourg. Brief report see Radiogram 1330.

The 4th and 5th Torpedoboat Flotillas planted the mine barrage N4 during the night of 24 Mar. At 0155 the group was attacked with torpedoes by what was believed to be a group of PT-boats; the torpedoes were outmanoeuvred. In spite of firing of approximately 200 star shells, the enemy was not sighted.

During the night of 25 Mar. operation of the second, fourth and eighth PT-boat Flotillas from the Dutch area is planned against southbound convoys resp. if weather conditions getting worse from lurking position against enemy PT-boats. The execution of minefield task N 24 is planned also.

During the night of 24 Mar. the convoy BROMBERG from Cherbourg to Le Havre and the convoy CHARLOTTE from Dunkerque to Flushing was executed as planned. During the night of 25 Mar. the convoy BROMBERG is to be proceeded to Dieppe.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

North Sea:

Escort-minesweeping and defense duties were executed as planned. The minesweeper M "261" scored a mine-hit in the Elbe-Weser area and proceeded with her own engines to Cuxhaven. Twelve mines were cleared in the areas of the river mouths and at the Dutch coast.

From 0040 - 0118 the Group B of the 34th Minesweeping Flotilla was engaged with enemy PT-boats in AN 8531. After having been fired on, the enemy shoved off. From 0450-0505 the patrol boat position Rome reports engagement with enemy PT-boats which went off to the west under smoke cover. Our own vessels were neither fired on nor did they suffer casualties.

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The convoy 1233 Helder-Elbe has been executed. The 21st Landing Flotilla transferred from Helder to Elbe. At 0900 the convoy 488 Elbe-Hook weighed anchor off Den Helder and proceeded at 1930.

The K "4" put out escorted by two minesweepers to AN 6697 in order to survey the Eastern edge of the declared area.

During the night of 25 Mar. the proceeding of the convoy of steamer CHARLOTTE from Flushing to Hook van Holland has been started.

Approximately 49 000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 33 planes were detected on mission. At 0530 one plane is reporting air torpedo attacks on three merchantmen lying stopped, without obtaining hits.

At 1839 one plane reports bombing of a merchantman without observed effect. Positions were not recognizable.

One British vessel was located both west of the Shetlands and in the outlet of the Northern Canal.

2. Own Situation:

During the night of 24 Mar. little enemy flying activity was reported in the area of Lindesnes up to Songefjord.

The steamer SCHWABENLAND has been set aground in Flakkefiord. At 0533 one submarine chasing group was unsuccessfully attacked with air torpedo off Lister. (See enemy situation).

At 1840 the attack was repeated by three enemy planes south of Lister. One attacking plane was shot down.

Thirty-six northbound and 26 southbound ships were escorted.

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IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Thirty-two boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances, 13 boats and two minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea were engaged in minesweeping. Six mines were swept in the Kiel Bay and in Fehmarn Belt and one self explosion was observed.

At 2400 on 24 Mar. the steamer OSTARA (1281 BRT) struck a mine south of Kjelsnor. At 1352 on 25 Mar. the Norwegian steamer BONN reported mine-hit on the same position. The channel 28 is blocked.

In the Baltic Sea Entrances, the Baltic Sea and in the area of the Commander Minesweepers Baltic convoys were executed as planned without incidents.

The Commander of the 24th Landing Flotilla arrived at Tallinn from Hochland with three Naval landing craft, and two motor minesweepers. Owing to bad weather conditions during the night of 24 Mar. the nightfighter directing ship TOGO was not in operation.

The Commander of the 1st Minesweeping Flotilla reports, after having been relieved, that on 23 Mar. in total 21 air raids of about 140 - 150 enemy planes were carried out against our own patrol forces in Narva Bay. Thereby five planes were shot down.

The netlaying is continued.

V. Submarine Warfare

1. Enemy Situation:

From 13 - 19 Mar. in total 45 position reports inclusively presumable submarine locations were stated in wireless communication according to Radio Monitoring. Thereof, five were in the North Atlantic west of 40° West, 38 in the North Atlantic east of 40° West, eight in the Mediterranean and four in the Indian Ocean.

2. Own Situation:

On 24 Mar. the submarine U "302" was shoved off from the convoy reported in BE 4116. For the rest no particular reports.

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VI. Aerial Warfare

In the morning 80 enemy planes penetrated into the coastal area of Belgium/Northern France without trying attacks. In the course of day several 100 bombers with fighter cover attacked the railroad junction point Hirson. An ammunition train was hit.

In Western France 40 penetrations without attacks were reported. During the night of 25 Mar. 150 missions into the northern French/Belgian area with bombing at Maubeuge and 60 missions in the area of Le Havre - Lyon Tours with attacks on the airplane engine and wagon factories were reported.

Reich Territory:

In the raid on Berlin during the night of 24 Mar. many bombs dropped into old damage sites. Large fires could be prevented.

Isolated enemy intruders were reported in the area of Hannover, Mecklenburg, Bremen, Duisburg, Nuernberg and Pirmasens. During the night of 25 Mar. several enemy planes penetrated into the area of Berlin up to Frankfurt/Oder. Some bombs were dropped.

Owing to hits on the Lippe-Bridge, the railroad communication Hamm-Muenster was suspended.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 24 Mar. eight reconnaissance planes were detected in the Aegean. One hundred and eighty four-engined planes and fighters penetrated via Sibenik into the area of Agram without executing any raids. Four four-engined planes were shot down by our own fighters. Further 80 missions were directed towards Bihac via Sibenik without any attacks; the planes flew off in reciprocal course. In the front area of the Italian area 650 enemy planes were gathered, four of them were shot down. Besides this, transportation installations in Central and North-Italy were attacked.

During the night of 24 Mar. two reconnaissance planes were discovered in the Aegean and ten enemy planes were recognized supplying guerilla bands. Via Scutari fifty enemy planes penetrated into the Bulgarian area. Twenty planes attacked Sofiya with bombing the whole area of the town under closed cloud cover, while 30 planes proceeded to Plovdiv.

In the morning of 25 Mar. reconnaissance missions were flown by our own planes in the Italian area.

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Eastern Area:

On 24 Mar. 936 own and 630 enemy missions were flown on the Eastern Front, four of our own and eleven enemy planes were shot down.

At 1500, 50 enemy planes attacked Tallinn. Details are still lacking.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West

Enemy Situation:

According to Intelligence report from 21 Mar. the following ships were lying in the harbor of Algiers: The RICHELIEU, the cruiser DUCUAY TROUIN, three transports, 38 freighters. Further 14 freighters were lying in the Bay.

On 25 Mar. 13 freighters and three corvettes left Gibraltar Atlantic bound.

Own Situation:

Two vessels with 2612 BRT were escorted off the French south coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

Owing to bad weather conditions on the afternoon of 24 Mar. and during the night of 25 Mar. our air reconnaissance in the Northern Tyrrhenian Sea was imperfect. At 0725 on 25 Mar. ten merchantmen were recognized heading to the beachhead in discovered supply route. In Anzio increased unloading was stated. In the area Anzio-Ponza usual supply traffic could be observed. On 24 Mar. landing of materiel in the beachhead was fought successfully by our own army batteries. One firing cruiser was forced to show off. At 1400 two freighters, five LST's, six LCJ's, two light cruisers, one destroyer and two further escort vessels were sailing on 160° 15 miles south of Nettuno.

At 0600, 32 merchantmen with five patrol vessels were sailing 190 miles southeast of Malta with course to the isle.

Strong aerial survey of the ports on the Italian West and East coast is lasting on.

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Own Situation:

In the new air raids on Leghorn at 1030 on the 25 Mar. serious damage was inflicted at the dockyard but none in the port.

In the air raid on Senegallia on the afternoon of 24 March, the passage into the inner port-basin was blocked owing to butts on the mole.

Up to now one Italian PT-boat did not yet come back from operations off the beachhead.

Two torpedoboats (foreign) left La Spezia, Elba bound for executing the minefield operation "Knick."

Owing to bad weather, the convoy shipping was curtailed. Patrol duties were cancelled.

The submarine U "466" reported effective breaking-through through Gibraltar narrows from CH 5425.

With reference to the increasing threatening of the front supply by the enemy air force, the German Naval Command Italy applies for detailing of heavy naval anti aircraft artillery for protecting the supply ports. Up to now the anti-aircraft defense of the ports has already been established by cogent reason with the naval anti aircraft artillery (ships) and alarm anti-aircraft artillery.

The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff decided that heavy, stationed anti aircraft artillery has not been available that the Navy does not dispose of any heavy mobile naval anti aircraft artillery. The defense of the Italian ports would be the task of the German Air Force. The German Naval Command Italy was instructed to approach the Air Force.

In the beginning of March, the German Naval Command Italy asked for allocation of further PT-boats, for the 10th MAS-Flotilla.

In this matter the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff states, that up to now three Italian PT-boats in Spezia and two mine sweepers in Venice had been allotted to this flotilla. In reference to the request three more Italian PT-boats were allotted to the German Naval Command Italy by order of the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff which will be equipped with complements of the 10th MAS-Flotilla and will operate in the bounds of this flotilla. There are no more PT-boats or mine-sweepers left. PT-boats still being in construction in North-Italy will not be completed and broke up owing to the backward state of construction and referring to the apply of the German Naval Command Italy. [Smooth interpretation by Op-292A: Referring to the proposal (?) of the German Naval Command Italy, PT-boats still under construction in North-Italy will not be completed, and [will be] broken up because of the backward state of construction.] Further strengthening

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of the 10th Italian PT-Flotilla as it was asked for by the Admiral Sparzani in his discussion with the Commander in Chief of the German Naval Command Italy will therefore not be possible. (See War Diary 4 Mar. Special Items, cypher IV).

3. Area of the Naval Group South

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

According to reports of Intelligence Division from 23 Mar. large troop concentrations of the Allies in Bari were reported, thus creating news of landing operations in North Epirus and Albanis.

Own Situation:

In the course of 23 Mar. heavy fighting took place on Hvar. Our own troops are concentrated in the Eastern part of the isle.

The isle of Solta again is seized firmly in our own hands.

On the afternoon of 24 Mar. the minelayer RAMB III left Trieste for minelaying operation "Biber." Owing to Bora storm, the operation was suspended.

Regarding the request of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South-West concerning the supply of the Naval landing craft to the Adriatic (see War Diary 23 Mar.), the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff transmits that it has already been ordered that the first six Naval landing craft are to be sent to the German Naval Command Italy. The difficulties which have been occurred are partially depending on insufficient supply facilities by railroad.

In regard to serious losses of tonnage in the Adriatic caused by enemy planes in March, the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff op requests the Naval Staff for a new examination of further extending measures in anti-aircraft defense beyond the increased precautions already executed up to now. Especially the possibility should be examined for a new line in calling up supplementary one to another materiel by the Air Force, personnel by the Navy. Continuing of ships losses in the present extent, so the Armed Forces High Command is now stating too, must in the consequences lead to succumbing of the entire shipping in this area.

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b. Aegean:

Owing to weather conditions, the sailing of the PT-boats S "601" and S "603" from Corfu to the Aegean as well as those of a convoy from Piraeus has been postponed.

On 23 Mar. four fleeing sailing ships of guerrillas were sunk by our own planes with gunfire in the NW-part of the Gulf of Euboea. On 25 Mar. the submarine chaser "2141" was shelled by 7.5 cm gunfire, grenade throwers and machine gun fire from ashore on the east coast of Pelion peninsula. She replied the fire.

At 1425 seven enemy planes attacked Mikonos and sunk four motor sailing ships, among them one Red-Cross-Ship and one sailing ship. Another sailing ship sustained damage.

c. Black Sea

The Operations Staff "Margarethe" (Hungary) details off commandos of the operations group 111 in the shipyards of Ujvidek and Budapest in screening them as new Construction Acquaintances.

In the air raid on Sofiya the naval quarters remained untouched.

Naval landing craft and motor minesweeper which were sent out against located vessels northeast of Cape Takil on the evening of 24 Mar. did not encounter the enemy though location was lasting on.

The submarine U "18" left Constanța for war cruise. Otherwise nothing to report.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia

Concerning the report of the Armed Forces Attache Tokyo was already reported in the conference on the situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy. Copy of relevant telegram as per 1/Skl. 9158/44 Gkdos. in War Diary Part C, Volume XV.

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Items of Political Importance

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy

I. The destruction of the submarine U "976" by gunfire of enemy planes at the meeting point with the escort forces off St. Nazaire has to give the occasion that now the Air Force will do more about defending the escort of submarines leaving and arriving at port. The Commander in Chief, Navy gave the relevant order to the Submarine Division.

Additional operation of torpedoboats has to be provided by the Group West in order to make valid their effective anti aircraft artillery.

II. Report of the Chief of Mine Warfare Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff on British minelaying operations in the Channel and North Sea. There is the striking fact that in Channel area numerous mines equipped with time setting devices are found while in Netherlands area and in the Heligoland Bight however only mines are found without time setting device. Identifications could be valued to be free from objection, because the examination of mines which dropped ashore are forming the basic elements.

These identifications could point out that landing operations in the Netherlands area NE of Den Helder would not be planned, but at any rate these observations would give an essential fact in this direction.

III. The Commander in Chief, Navy declared the plans of the Group South in preparing emergency headquarters in Fuenfkirchen to be highly not answering the purpose. The inevitable becoming known of this kind of precaution just now would arise extremely unfavorable reactions on the Balkans.

IV. Report of the Chief of Mine Warfare Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff

a. on coastal mine A production

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The Commander in Chief, Navy orders further inquiries at the Group West whether the production might not begin in Le Havre before 30 Apr.

- b. on British ground mines (way of operation, property etc.)

V. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff:

According to report of the ambassador v. Papen, a discussion between the Turkish ambassador in Moscow and Molotov is to have taken place on 29 Feb. Molotov is said to have requested the ambassador to inform his government that the Soviet Union would have no more interests at all in Turkey's sharing in the war. Besides this, the negotiations for prolongation of the Turkish - Russian Friendship Agreement which will have expired on 7 Nov. 1945 are to be concluded in Ankara.

Thoroughly informed circles believe that Turkey would have pledged herself to support a Russian large scale landing operation in Bulgaria.

Copy of the report as per l/Skl. 9427/44 GKdos. in War Diary Part e Volume XIV a.

VI. Army Situation:

The following is understood from Radiogram of the Admiral Black Sea to Group South:

"1. After having succeeded in withdrawing the 6th and 8th Armies across the Bug-River, the Army is hoping to hold the lower Bug position though only little heavy equipment has been salvaged and the troops were very warworn. Between the 8th Army and the 1st Panzer Army there is existing a large gap in which the enemy pushed through and has moved inwards to the South. Counter measures are going on, after the mobilization the Romanians are forming up on the "Sereth". If the measures against the enemy advancing towards South would be effective and thereby would eliminate the danger for Odessa seems still to be quite questionable.

2. For a new time the Army, (Headquarter) 17 got the order to hold the Crimea. Because reinforcements and replacements for casualties can not be supplied no more, the High Command, Army refused the request of the Army (Headquarters) 17 for mopping up the Sivash beachhead. There-with the enemy has the opportunity after furnishing the dam across the Sivash to start the attack on Crimea from this bridgehead with large forces. At first, no tokens revealing large scale attacks were at hand.

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The enemy attacks of the last day on the northern and eastern front showed no great penetrating power. Therefore at present the Army/Headquarters 17 judges the situation on Crimea very confidently, all the more since good stocks especially of ammunition and supply of army forces had been carried by the transport performances of the last months.

Special Items

I. It is understood from a Radiogram of the Admiral Black Sea to the Group South that in accordance with Intelligence report Romanian circles at this time are expressing the expectation that in event of German seizure of power in Romania accounting to the Hungarian pattern the plan would exist to withdraw the Romanian naval forces from German seizure under leadership of the Admiral Macellariu.

With all reservation, the Naval Staff sends this message for information to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Navy.

The Admiral Black Sea adopted precautionary measures that for the next time the attitude of the Romanians would be observed more intensively. He plans to visit Constanța and Bukarest and the Admiral Macellariu and Georgescu in the week from 3 Apr.

Nothing has to be arranged by the Naval Staff.

II. At 1246 on 26 Mar. the following wireless message of the Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army Group A to the Group South was read with:

"The situation of the Army Group A seems so much endangered to me that one may count soon on

1. the withdrawal of Bug positions
2. the evacuation of Crimea."

Hereto the Commanding General Group South radioed to the Admiral Black Sea:

In case the operation described in Radiogram 1246/95 Naval Liaison Officer Army Group A should become reality, the Group South and the Admiral Black Sea would stand before a decisive and important task because all would depend on leading back the retrievable personnel and materiel too, with losses the few as possible. The reflections

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and preparation for that going deeply into details have to be started with the greatest possible responsibility. Also, in this decisive operation the successful fighting of the Admiral Black Sea in his area up to now will prove true for a new time.

III. In addition to the report of the Naval Command Norway concerning the weakening of the anti-aircraft defense of Kristiansand South the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff advises the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff that with all understanding for the distressed conditions of the Air Force the weakening of the anti-aircraft defense Kristiansand is thought to be a very serious matter because of the importance of the convoy traffic and supply to all the services in Norway.

IV. By order of the Air Force, Operations Staff, the ship anti-aircraft artillery group 1/196 has been subordinated with immediate effect as to operational matters to the Commanding General Air Force, Denmark, who according to that has to take over the convoy defence in the Skagerrak for the Commanding Admiral Defenses Baltic in full responsibility. This directive of the Air Force, Operations Staff has been created without participation of the Naval Staff only by reason of interior discussions between the 5th Air Force, Naval Group North/Fleet and the Shipborne anti-aircraft group. After examination of the possibilities given at present the Naval Staff sees the only way for reducing the losses in tonnage at the convoy routes at the southern Norwegian coast which are increasing to an unbearable extent, in transferring the operational part of the shipborne anti-aircraft squadron 1/196 to an airfield of southwestern Norway and in operational subordination under the 5th Air Force. The task of these planes would be, the convoy escort and submarine hunting in the inner coastal forwarded area of southwestern Norway according to the directives of the Naval Command Norway. Within the given situation the Naval Staff is expressively renouncing escort cover for submarines between Oslo and Denmark. The Air Force, Operations Staff is requested to limit or suspend the operational subordination of the 1/196 under the Commanding General, Air Force in Denmark to adequate degree and to order the directive for execution of the transfer of the operational part of the 1/196 squadron as well as forward relevant operational directive to the 5th Air Force. Copy of the draught 1/Skl I L 9248/44 GXdos in War Diary Part C Volume V.

Situation 26 March 1944

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I. War in Foreign Waters

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group were 7, at the 19th Group were 45 planes detected over the outer Gulf of Biscay up to 18° West, at the Azores Squadrons 3 planes were detected.

Six British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

At 0725 our own air reconnaissance sighted two small what were thought to be war vessels on course 60° 160 miles west of Brest.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine each was swept off Lorient, off Brest, off St. Nazaire and off Bayonne. Owing to suspected ground mines, the Gironde mouth is blocked.

Three leaving and three entering submarines were escorted.

At 1102, the minesweeper subdivision escorting the entering submarine U "390" was attacked with gunfire in low level flight by six Mosquito planes 40 miles southwest of St. Nazaire. By anti-aircraft fire at 2000 meter range the attacking planes shoved off. No damage was inflicted.

Channel Area:

During the night of 25 Mar. the 38th Minesweeping Flotilla shortly was engaged with enemy PT-boats NE of Dunkerque which were lying stopped presumably met in executing minesweeping duties. Battle brief report see Radiogram 0710.

The Convoy BROMF~~ERG~~ was continued from Le Havre to Dieppe. At 0202 the escort forces were shortly engaged with enemy PT and gun boats west of Dieppe.

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Further continuation of the convoy from Dieppe to Dunkerque is planned for midnight of 27 Mar.

The boats of the 2nd, 4th and 8th PT-boat Flotillas operating on British convoy channels at the southeast coast were engaged with enemy destroyers which partially fought the boats by means of location. Therefore our own attacks remained unsuccessful. Noticeable casualties and damages did not occur. Brief report see Radiogram 1840.

On the evening of 25 Mar. the 4th and 5th Torpedo-boat Flotillas planted the barrage N 24 as planned. At 0100 of 26 Mar. the boats entered Le Havre. During the night of 26 Mar. torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas against eastbound convoys in Lyme-Bay is planned from Cherbourg.

The Commander PT-boats reports continuous air raids on Ymuiden from 1300 - 1500. Presumably the main target was the PT-boat pens. The new construction pen was hit. The PT-boats S "93" and S "129" lying outside of the pen were annihilated. Casualties of personnel did not occur.

From 1740 the Wuerzburg location sets installed at the coast from Cherbourg to Gravelines were intercepted by enemy radiation. Crush suppression precautions were introduced.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

North Sea

Escort minesweeping and patrol duties were executed as planned. Three mines were swept in the Heligoland Bight, two mines were swept off Ymuiden. Up to now, no observations were reported by the boats which were employed in surveying the east edge of the declared area.

The convoy 488 Elbe - Hook has been executed. One convoy with 8 500 BRT was executed in the Zuider Sea.

In addition to the heavy air raid on Ymuiden was reported that the completed pens only inflicted small craters up to 40 cm depth of penetration of projectile. The breakdown of materiel and construction tools at the new construction of pens was very serious. The PT-boats pier has been fully destroyed. Presumably, putting out to sea may be blocked at low tide. Besides of the two annihilated PT-boats four harbor defense boats, one floating torpedo battery and several boats were sunk. Further vessels had been damaged. The fitting-out depot and the mining and barrage command are destroyed.

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The storehouse of equipment is annihilated. Furthermore, the machinery for the radio beacon and the hall of fishing has been destroyed. In the naval sector twelve men were killed in action and three ones were reported to be seriously wounded. Up to now six planes were shot down certainly and three more presumably may be shot down.

Norway, Northern Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 22 planes were detected over the central North Sea and off the Norwegian coast in the area of Stadlandet.

2. Own Situation:

On 24 Mar. four enemy planes attacked the Kiberg-battery with bombs and gunfire without inflicting any damage. On the evening of 25 Mar. one lorry-platoon of the Air Force was surprisingly attacked in the area of Vadsoe. Six soldiers captured and taken off one was killed in action.

Thereby six northbound and 19 southbound ships were escorted.

The battleship TIRPITZ is reporting readiness for sailing presumably up to 7 Apr. with two propellers, two turbines driven and one Diesel power station without the auxiliary boiler, from 8 Apr. presumably with three propellers and the same power stations.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 26 boats, in the Baltic 20 boats and eight minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. On 26 March two mines were swept in the Kiel Bay. With 25 Mar. sweeping of another mine in Fehmarn Belt is reported.

On the afternoon of 25 Mar. the steamer ROTHENFELS (7 800 BRT) ran aground south of Korsøer.

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East of Roedvik the Finnish steamer MARGARETE 1560 BRT was rammed by a Swedish steamer and sunk.

In the whole area of the Baltic Sea and in Norway convoys were executed as planned and without incidents.

With the commander-boat and six boats, the 24th Landing Flotilla is proceeding from Swinemuende to Pillau.

Owing to weather conditions, netlaying in the Gulf of Finland has been suspended.

Owing to ramming with a tug, the netlayer "1" was slightly damaged and entered Tallinn for repairs.

The defense of Narva Bay has been carried out by minesweepers and patrol boats as planned. Owing to weather conditions, armed fishing vessels and artillery ferry barges had been restrained in Aseri. The vessels were continuously exposed to serious air raid and suffered casualties. Two planes were shot down. Also near Tyters and at the coast of Aseri very busy enemy air activity with bombing and gunfire against our own naval forces was reported.

V. Submarine Warfare

The submarine U "262" sighted two destroyers in AK 3925.

The submarine U "218" executed minelaying operation off Port Castries. Owing to defense the task off Trinidad has not been achieved. The boat is planning to plant further two MTA's* off St. Juan and Puerto-Rico.

Otherwise nothing to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare

West Area:

During the day, several hundred enemy planes penetrated into Belgium - Northern France. Heavy bombs were dropped in the area of Abbeville. The air raid in Ymuiden has already been reported.

Near Beauvais ten locomotives and some wagons have been destroyed.

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Some hundred fighters penetrated into the Dutch area while 350 four-engined planes with fighter cover attacked the railroad installations of Creil for a new time and damaged them and dropped bombs on Watten and on the naval fitting-out depot of Grenares.

Some airfields in Western France were attacked with gunfire and high explosives. One hundred and fifty enemy planes dropped bombs on the cutting off position of Valogne. Some damage was inflicted. Some planes were damaged on airfields.

Coming from the South, six fighters penetrated into the area of Montpellier without attacking.

During the night of 27 Mar. railway station and transportation installations in the Dutch - Belgian - Northern France area were attacked by rather strong groups. Presumably minelaying was carried out in Western France.

Reich Territory:

Approximately 30 four-engined planes coming from the South penetrated via Klagenfurt into the area of Ljubljana without executing attacks.

During the night of 26 Mar. numerous places in the Rhenian - Westfalian industrial area concentrated on Essen were attacked by rather strong enemy air groups. In the Krupp-plant, medium-sized damage was inflicted. Generally seen, the attack was very serious. No report has yet been submitted of our defense results during the whole day.

[Translated by Op-292A:

Mediterranean Theater:

On 25 Mar. weak enemy formations attacked Leghorn, Bologna and Florence. In the narrow area of the landing head 270 enemy aircraft were identified, the offensive activity of which continued to be hindered on account of weather conditions.

Our own aircraft were utilized for reconnaissance.

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Eastern Area:

On the eastern front were reported on 25 Mar. 1153 of our own operations and 310 enemy operations, besides 5 of our own and 29 enemy losses.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1620 hours a large convoy of 9 tankers and 64 freighters with 4 corvettes ran through the Gibraltar-narrows into the Atlantic. At 1700 hours 11 vessels, among them one transport vessel, one auxiliary cruiser, one "Cairo"-class cruiser and others ran out of the Mediterranean into Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

No particular events.]

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

Owing to bad weather conditions in the entire Mediterranean, our own air reconnaissance was badly curtailed. During the night of 25 Mar. 30 ships escorted by strong cover were detected by devices 15 miles west of Cape Circeo without any indication of course and speed: the German Naval Command Italy presumes they were newly arrived.

In the area of Anzio - Nettuno, ship targets were successfully shelled by our own Army artillery.

At 0630 our own air reconnaissance sighted south of Nettuno twelve large landing craft, six merchantmen, one destroyer and six escort vessels with course to Anzio. Furthermore, busy unloading activities were observed in the harbor of Anzio. One big fighting ship was reported to be in the Gaeta Bay, one presumably cruiser was reported 25 miles south of Ponza, and west of Anzio up to the area of Cape Circeo 25 destroyers were reported.

Own Situation:

An Italian PT-boat operating off Nettuno during the night of 24 March

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was sunk by enemy destroyers according to Radio Monitoring. Part of the crew was rescued.

During the night of 24 Mar. the Air Force was laying mines in the area off the beachhead.

On the afternoon of 26 Mar. one emerged enemy submarine shelled the harbor of Oneglia southwest of Genoa. The fire was replied.

Owing to weather conditions, the execution of the minelaying operation Knick by torpedoboats was postponed for a new time. The execution of the convoy and patrol duties also was curtailed. South of Vadar one barge ran aground.

According to the statements of returning Italian soldiers the sinking of the British mine cruiser ABDIEL by striking a mine on 9 Sept. 1943 was confirmed.

3. Area of the Naval Group South

a. Adriatic:

On the evening of 24 Mar. an enemy thrust against the harbor of Polace at Mljex carried out by two boats was refused by our own occupation forces. Navigation was curtailed owing to Bora-storms.

On the afternoon of 24 Mar. the tanker LIGURIO was set afire by enemy planes and has been totally annihilated.

On 25 Mar. the enemy operating at Hvar has been repulsed to the west by attacks of our own troops.

b. Aegean:

At 0959 the steamer GERTRUD was attacked by an enemy submarine with quadruple spread misfire salvo in the Suda Bay. At 2030 the convoy GERTRUD arrived at Piraeus.

According to report of the Naval Shore Commander Western Greece, one motor sailing ship heading west from which 20 British soldiers were taken prisoner and numerous weapons were captured, presumably sabotage troops was captured at 1130 on 25 Mar. off the southern tips of Kephallonia.

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c. Black Sea:

The Group South reports that the Romanian Secretary of the Navy has ordered that lighters up to now engaged in oversea supply flying the Romanian colors after having unloaded in Romania should not be reloaded again and have to be put in operation for purposes of the Romanian mobilization. Therefore, the Group South doubts that by doing so 25 000 tons monthly performances of lighter tonnage should be withdrawn from the supply and has arranged the required fact via the German General in Romania.

The relief of the Special Operations Command 111 will be executed by the Group South with "Vorwaerts"-personnel which has been got free in the area of the Admiral Black Sea. The replacement of the 1st Lt. Jaeger is planned by the 1st Lt. Schreiner available for further employment who up to now belonged to the Danube-Flotilla. Otherwise no special events. /

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia

By reason of the statements given by the Japanese Admiralty Staff the Naval Attache Tokyo reports that for redressing the threatening lack of ship tonnage the whole tonnage available at this time is employed almost entirely in iron and coal shipping from the South and from China as far as not needed for military purposes. The monthly capacity of new construction increased from 80 000 tons in the beginning of 1943 to 130 000 tons in the beginning of 1944. Up to the change of year, an increasing to 160 000 tons is hoped to be fulfilled. But especially the lack of workers and their malnutrition is aggravating the problem seriously. All shipments from the South except those for iron are executing only wooden ships the production of which is to be increased beyond 1 000 000 BRT in the year 1944.

The losses by enemy action especially by submarines increased from the beginning of 1943 with a monthly average of 120 000 BRT to more than 200 000 BRT in the beginning of 1944. Recently, in concentrating all defence weapons in one overseas-traffic defence Department under Admiral Okawa an essential falling off has been reached. Up to now, the losses during March are less than 40 000 BRT.

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Items of Political Importance

On 26 Mar. Churchill was speaking over the radio. A large part of his arguments was concerned with innerpolitical resp. postwar problems. Summary is recapitulated in the Foreign Press Report No. 87/44 / appendix. Repetition that submarine danger was the greatest peril to Great Britain in this war. Conformably high would be the satisfaction to have overcome this peril. And then reference to the warfare in the Far East. It would be possible that the war in the Pacific Ocean would be developing faster as supposed up to now. A strong battle fleet under command of the Admiral Sommerville would be operating in the Indian Waters in order to oppose the main force of the Japanese Fleet in the case that this one would turn to the west after having avoided battle against the Americans. Otherwise he would have the opinion that up to the collapse of Germany and Japan not as much time would pass as he would have supposed to be needed before one year ago.

No indications could be drawn from the speech indicating that certain movements had begun to appear against the personality of Mr. Eden. Also sizable going into the British - Russian relations had been thoroughly avoided. According to an Exchange report there are certain disappointments within political and press-circles of Washington because of Churchill's speech in which one is missing his point of view on the acute political and strategical questions.

The German ambassador reports on a discussion with Franco on 17 Mar. in the course of which this one declared on behalf of the second front:

"The Caudillo is attaching particular importance to the following, strictly secret matters which allegedly he heard by absolutely reliable sources during the last days and of which he begged me to pass on as soon as possible.

In December 1943 Stalin would have claimed in Teheran that the large Anglo-Saxon attack against the European fortress would take place by the main thrust from the Atlantic against France as well by attendant actions against Norway and against the Balkans. This request of Stalin should be accepted by Roosevelt and Churchill; indeed, a precise moment for the beginning of the attack should not be settled but one had confined oneself to the formula: "as soon as possible." During January 1944, the North American military Headquarters then came to the knowledge that the Atlantic coast should be fortified far too much as one could risk the promised invasion. Therefore, the North-American Government then applied to the British and proposed to postpone the invasion of Europe at first. The British Government should have agreed with this proposal and both the Governments should have applied to the Soviet Government and forwarded their doubts against the invasion of Europe. But Stalin should have been very indignant at this attitude

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of the British and North-American Governments and he is said to have informed the Central Officials in Moscow which according to his directive had decided in the first days of February upon the fact not to insist on the absolute fulfillment of the promise of invasion given in Teheran. This conclusion should have been transmitted officially by the Soviet Government to the British and North American Governments during the days approximately around 7 Febr. with the supplement that the Soviet Government would take up her full free line of action again if the British and North American Governments would not execute immediately the invasion promised firmly. This Russian judgment is said to have evoked alarm in London and Washington and finally caused the consequence that the plans of invasion and that would be in the manner originally planned, that is to say main thrust against the Atlantic Front and attendant operations against Norway and the Balkans now would be started soon earnestly. The Caudillo said that this development on the military area had the consequences that the political and economical pressure of the Anglo-Americans imposed on Spain should have weakened essentially during the last three weeks; obviously the British and Americans would want to avoid an incidental conflict with Spain in the very moment when they are going to operate against the Atlantic fortification, a conflict they would have feared less in January, because then they would have been bent on avoiding the invasion.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy

I. Army Situation

After returning from Headquarters A, the Liaison Officer gives the following judgment of the Operations Department of the Army General Staff:

The Army Group South has been divided into three parts. The 1st Tank Army in the area north of Kamenez - Podolsk has nearly been enclosed. The plan of the Russians is to encircle the Army Group A with the 6th and 8th Armies by deep penetration beyond Jassy along both sides of the Pruth-River. Heavy frontal attacks are to be expected at the Bug River. Another very strong enemy Army Group will presumably advance from the area between Dubno and the Carpathian Mountains to the West. Aside from the political target of the capture of Lemberg, these forces may later on turn to the Northwest together with a strong group of forces in the area southeast of Brest in order to smash the Army Group Center by means of a large scale offensive in direction to Brest. But besides this, the threatening of the Army Group North by an enemy offensive to be expected from the area Nevel - Peipus - Lake in direction to Riga will remain. At the Finnish Front tokens of farthest

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going enemy preparations are revealing for dividing the Army of Lapp-land and in separating it from the Finnish Front by an attack from the Kandalaksha Front in direction to the Gulf of Finland.

According to opinion of the Operations Department the Army Group A has to be withdrawn under immediate evacuation of Crimea behind the Dniester River. Thereby Odessa must be held as bridgehead. But for long Odessa cannot be defended and development would pass beyond all desires of that kind. The forces getting free therewith are to be employed between Dniester River and Carpathian Mountains. Now in the middle of the Southern Front one has to withdraw to the Carpathian Mountains. The 1st Tank Army receives the order to break through to the West. In the area of Lemberg, one of our own task forces (divisions from the West and the Balkans) will be concentrated. Coming from the area around Brest, one of our own counter-offensive operations formed with weak forces is starting to win the Stochod sector."

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports on the speech of Mr. Churchill.

Otherwise no particular reports and decisions.

Special Items

I. In regard to the war-decisive importance of the control of the Baltic Sea, the Commander in Chief, Navy set up a short memorandum on the importance of the Narva position for the entire warfare and sent it to the Armed Forces High Command Operations Staff, Navy, the Admiral attached to the Fuehrer Headquarters, the Naval Liaison Officer to the High Command, Army/Army General Staff, the Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff, Operations Branch, Naval Liaison. Copy as per 1 Skl./950/44 Gkdos. Chfs. in War Diary, Part C, Volume III.

In summary, the memorandum is concluding as follows:

"Abandoning the Narva position would bring up considerable set-backs to the entire warfare, because, in threatening the Baltic Sea:

1. The supply of the Army at the Northern Front and its flanks at the coast would be endangered.
2. Further standing of Finland in the war would be questionable.
3. The economical utilization of Northern Europe especially the supply of the Ordnance industries with iron-ore would be endangered.
4. The submarine warfare against the Anglo-Americans would be seriously endangered.

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Therefore it must be the aim of the German warfare to hold the Narva position at any rate."

II. On 16 Mar. the Commanding General of the Army Group North executed a map manoeuvre in Tallinn with authoritative headquarters of the Navy and Air Force and the Commanding General of the Army Group Narva and with the Commander of the Shore Defense Baltic Sea on the possibility of a Russian landing operation at the Estonian coast. The Commander of the Naval War Academy participated as representative of the Navy. The Army Group North conveyed the experiences which have revealed for the Services. Copy of relevant writing as per 1 Skl 888/44 Gkdos Chefs in document 1. Skl I op VI., 2nd Volume 3. Evaluation has begun.

Supplementary to this report, the Commander in Chief, Navy reports to the Fuehrer with copy to the Commanding General of the Army Group North:

"1. For the next time, the Navy sees its first task in the Baltic Sea in blocking the Gulf of Finland, thus avoiding a breaking through of the Russian Fleet at any rate. To obtain this aim, the reinforcement of the "Seeigel" barrage system is starting at this time and will be executed as soon as the ice would have melted far enough. For surveying the barrage system and for fighting Russian landing attempts in the Narva Bay, the Commander Minesweepers East has at his immediate disposal except his own forces (minesweepers, patrol boats and artillery ferry barges) the destroyers available in the area of Tallinn (at this time three ones) and PT-boats (eight). Beyond this, immediate concentration of cruisers which are ready for war of the Training Unit (at this time SCHEER, PRINZ EUGEN, NUERNBERG, EMDEN changing in the course of summer, LUETZOW, HIPPER, KOELN) is planned from the area of Gotenhafen/Libau as well of the torpedo-boats being engaged in submarine training of the 2nd and 3rd Torpedo-boat Flotillas in event of a rupture or landing attempt.

2. In case that nevertheless the Russian is to be breaking through with rather strong forces into the Baltic Sea, it has been planned owing to the particular importance of the Baltic Sea, to send out the cruisers of the Training Unit and the cover forces required for them against the Russian Fleet, all the more since the employment of these ships against an invasion operation does not prove any success. In this case moreover, all submarines ready for action would be withdrawn from the Training Flotillas for operation in the Baltic Sea.

3. Order has been issued for production of 8000 coastal mines for minelaying at the landing areas on the Estonian coast. But minelaying will not be accomplished up to 1 May.

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4. Reinforcements of the artilleristic shore defense only can be executed with the cost to other areas."

The Group North/Fleet, the Naval Command Baltic Sea, the Admiral Baltic Countries and the Commander Minesweepers Baltic Sea will be informed. Copy of the draught 1 Skl. 943/44 Gkdos. Chefsache in War Diary Part C Volume III.

III. Concerning Hungary, the Armed Forces Operations Staff, Navy reports in the information on the situation that owing to the development of the situation at the Eastern Front the Hungarian area east of the Thisca-River has been declared operational area under German Command. The German Commanding General in the operational area of Eastern Hungary is the General von Both. For uniform command of the supply in the whole Hungarian area, a Quartermaster General, Hungary has been appointed, who will be subordinated under the Armed Forces Attache.

Romania and Hungary had been informed of the necessity of this decisive precaution with regard to the situation in the East. The aim is, to stop the Russian under effort of all forces and to line up a new closed front. Five divisions will be transferred to the Army Group South, two of them SS-tank divisions from the West Area. The Hungarian Carpathian-Divisions will be advanced to the East. Hungarian Divisions which will withdraw from full operational employment and cooperation will be disarmed.

The Group South and the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff were informed by the Operations Division, Naval Staff.

IV. In a crusative Radiogram to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Navy, the Naval Staff is conveying its opinion of the capture of the enemy bases of Lissa and Lagosta for the whole situation on the East coast of the Adriatic. Copy 1 Skl Ia 913/44 Gkdos. Chefsache in War Diary Part C, Volume XIV. The Naval Staff requests the Armed Forces High Command to examine the possibility of temporary reinforcements of the forces of the Commanding General Armed Forces South-East and especially of the Air Force Command South East for purpose of capturing Lissa.

V. The Group West reports, that according to the report of the Commander of the 5th Torpedoboat Flotilla for a new time since Christmas, the Commanding Officers of CONDOR, GREIF and JAGUAR would be changed and are to be replaced by officers who have not at all or only a short termed training time as watch-keepers on torpedoboats. Therefore the Group has decided despite imminent threatening of landing operations in the Channel and therefore in contrary to the operative necessities to transfer the flotilla during the period of full moon in April for

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executing exercises to the West coast. The Group is asking for more steady situation in officer appointments as executed up to now within the naval units of the Commander Torpedo-boats in the West Area. The Operations Division, Naval Staff has arranged the assessment of the Commander destroyers who disavowed the report of the 5th Torpedo-boat Flotilla because the operational flotillas in the West Area are treated with priority by the Commander, Destroyers.

The Group North/Fleet agrees with the Group West that the training would be highly impaired by the frequent changes of officers and refers in contrary to the efforts of the Fleet Command and of the Commander, Destroyers to the necessity of calling up new torpedo-boats units in the Mediterranean as well as to the manning of new constructions. Since September 1943, 16 posts had been newly appointed for Commanding Officers, thereof eleven in the Mediterranean. Up to now, torpedo-boats being in operation are still in a much favorable position than the 2nd and 3rd Torpedo-boat Flotillas. For a new time the experiences are confirming the necessity to form up the trainings flotillas requested by the Fleet and the Commander, Destroyers and the torpedo-boats and destroyers manning detachments.

VI. Records of the session with the Commander in Chief, Navy concerning the torpedo-boat 44 resp. the supply submarines and transport submarines contains the War Diary Part B, Volume V as per 1 Skl a 9464/44 Gkdos resp. 8514/44 Gkdos.

VII. The submarine Division transmitted the following answer for the Naval Attache Tokyo on his request from 12 Mar. concerning "Zaunkoenig"-torpedo* and "Fatalist."*

"1. The Fa T-torpedo* is known to the Japanese. The MARCO POLO II will be equipped with some Fat-torpedoes.*

2. Regarding the "Zaunkoenig" the Commander in Chief, Navy confirmed the general directing that only that development of weapons of this war would be made known to the allies of which the employment promises success in this war. The successful utilization of the "Zaunkoenig"* by the Japanese would not be possible because the torpedo would not be tropically fit. Besides this, the delivery would not be possible owing to difficulties in production. Therefore the Commander in Chief, Navy decided that information of the Japanese is not allowed. The success against enemy destroyers is to be explained with the zig-zagging device* as far as this would come into question. In answering questions on sound equipment in the torpedo, there may be said that we, just as all Navies are doing, concern ourselves with the problem but did not reach results which were promising good success.

The above-mentioned regulations applying for the information of the Japanese Naval Attache in Germany also apply for the German Naval Attache in Japan.

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3. Report where the knowledge there on the name "Zaunkoenig"* is coming from."

Situation 27 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area

At the 15th Group were 15 at the 19th Group were 53 planes over the outer Biscaya at the Azores Squadrons one plane was detected.

Six British vessels were located in the rendez-vous area.

Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast

Two mines were swept in the area of Lorient. At 0917 the mine-exploding vessels "3" and "175" struck ground mines off La Pallice. Aboard the mine-exploding vessel "175" casualties were suffered.

Two entering submarines were escorted. At 0915 one group of four boats of the 44th Minesweeping Flotilla which entered escorting two submarines, were attacked by seven Mosquito-planes with gunfire and bombs off La Pallice. Our own fire of defence prevented an effective attack, one plane was observed to be shot down. Only unimportant damage and casualties occurred at the minesweepers. Brief report see Radiogram 1510.

At 0924 the mine-exploding vessel in leaving La Pallice was evidently attacked by the same planes. By gunfire casualties occurred. Brief report see Radiogram 2111. Just so, the mine exploding vessel "3" was attacked in vain by the seven Mosquito planes at 0917 both the mine exploding vessels reached La Pallice-roads by own power in spite of damages inflicted by heavy mine hits. Brief report Mine-exploding Vessel "3" see Radiogram 2110.

Channel Area

Owing to bad weather, the torpedo operation of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotilla during the night of 26 Mar. was suspended.

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At midnight of 26 Mar. the convoy BROMBERG left Dieppe but was recalled because the entering of Dunkerque before dawn was not certain; at 0430 the convoy entered Dieppe again.

One mine was swept west of Nieuport. During the night of 27 Mar. the laying of 360 buoys with anti sweep cutter by the 4th and 5th Torpedo boat Flotilla is planned in BF 3634 lower left corner and 3633 upper right corner. At 2100 the Flotillas left Le Havre.

At 0230 the 2nd, 4th, 8th PT-boat Flotillas left the Dutch bases in order to cut off and eventually to capture enemy PT-boats from lurking position.

III. North Sea, Northern Waters, Norway

North Sea:

Escort-patrol and minesweeping duties were executed as planned. Thirteen mines were swept in the Heligoland Bight and five ones off the Dutch coast.

Owing to mine detonation, the harbor defense vessel DC "24" sprung a leak and was towed in to Cuxhaven.

Owing to mine, the harbor defense boat DW "32" sunk.

In the morning hours of 27 Mar. the whale*-group sailing ahead from the convoy were attacked by enemy motor torpedoboats from lurking position. Owing to defense fire, the enemy shoved off, slight damage and light casualties occurred aboard patrolboat "2016". At 1930 the convoy 1235 Hook - Elbe-River started proceeding from Helder. North of Wangerooge the mine exploding vessel "29" was slightly damaged by mine detonation. The ship remains ready for action.

Four convoys with approximately 46 000 BRT were executed in the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters.

Norway, Northern Waters

Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group, five planes were detected in missions in the morning and two planes in the evening.

According to aerial photographic reconnaissance of 25 Mar. 21 steamers with approximately 120 000 BRT, one destroyer, one submarine, one minelayer were lying in Murmansk.

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According to Intelligence report, one steamer of 10 000 BRT and two steamers of 55 000 BRT with three escort-vessels entered Reykjavik on the 22 Mar.

In the same harbor, a new bomber formation was reported to be arrived during the night of 23 Mar.

The landing and fetching of about 50 soldiers who surprisingly attacked a long column of the Air Force at the Polar Coast (see War Diary 25 Mar.) was executed by three boats.

Own Situation:

On 26 Mar. unimportant enemy penetration was recognized in the area of Petsamo-Banak. Off Vadsoe a well-preserved Russian AT-Mine* was swept by a group of motor minesweepers.

On the afternoon of 26 Mar. a submarine telescope was sighted south of Lister. Two beaufighter planes were flying west of Floroey.

Thirty-three northbound and 27 southbound ships were escorted.

The Naval Command Norway reports the plan to block the narrows at Sandtogstrammen in the Tjeldsund by ground mines in event of A-case in order to defend the area of Narvik after enemy penetration may have occurred in the area of Harstad. Requirements of blocking materiel ten RMA* or RMH.*

In principle, the Naval Staff approved of the minelaying intention and allotted ten LMB* with firing unit MA 2 and rolling cover. Owing to conditions of currents, the RMA* and owing to too simple firing unit the RMH* are less suited for this task.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Intelligence, striking busy Radio communications were observed between Kronstadt and Lavensari.

Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 28 boats, in the Baltic Sea 20 boats and 15 minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. Six mines were swept in Fehmarn Sound and in the Kiel Bay.

Owing to mine hit off Kjelsuor, the steamer SPRFE (2867 BRT) had to be set aground south of Langeland. On the channel 28, cypher 1-3 compulsory escort was introduced for vessels of more than 1000 BRT.

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In the whole area of the Baltic Sea, convoys were executed as planned and without incidents.

No particular incidents were reported from the area of the Commander Minesweepers East.

On the evening of 26 Mar. the Admiral Baltic States reported enemy air raids on Dorpat without damage in port area.

On 26 Mar. at the Army Group Narva, the 11th and 227th Infantry Divisions were breaking through strong enemy positions after strong artillery preparations and cut off Westsack. Counter-attacks of forces brought forward were also repulsed against Ostsack.

At the 16th Army soon enemy attack is expected. At the 18th Army a four km deep penetration at the 15th Latvian SS-Division was cut off.

South of Pskov, enemy preparations of attacks were observed.

V. Submarine Warfare

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring, increased convoy traffic on the Atlantic North-Route was recognized since 20 February. Since this time, two convoys sailing always from the USA to Great Britain were detected with various Radio names which are leaving New York approximately at the same time. The convoys are estimated to be the HX-convoy resp. the A-part of the HX-convoy.

Own Situation:

In the Indian Ocean the submarine U "510," being on delayed return to Penang, sunk three steamers with altogether 18000 BRT and one freight sailing ship.

On 24 March the Submarine U "168" with the crew of the BRAKE aboard arrived at Batavia.

The shifting of the enemy tactics of attack against incoming and outgoing submarines from free sea area towards coastal areas where the boats are compelled to proceed emerged demands for reinforcement of our own convoy escort and fighter cover. The 10th Air Corps applies for reinforcement of the ZG 1 (destroyer squadron) by one squadron of JU "88" type planes. The request is urgently supported by the Submarine Division, Naval Staff.

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VI. Aerial Warfare

West Area

During the day, several 100 enemy penetrations were reported into the area of Ostende - Le Treport in Belgium - Northern France. There were no raids.

Approximately 90 enemy penetrations were reported in Western France. A convoy entering Isle d'Oleron was attacked with gunfire by one plane. The plane was shot down.

70 planes attacked the city and airfield of Chartres.

In the afternoon, several 100 Fortresses with strong fighter cover were sent out to attack numerous towns and airfields in Northern and Western France. Details see situation of the day.

Fourteen of our own planes were destroyed, others more or less destroyed. One hundred and eleven of our own fighters were in operation which succeeded in shooting down two planes. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down four other planes.

During the night of 22 Mar. only few enemy penetrations were reported from the West Area. One hundred and thirty-nine of our own planes were sent out to attack Bristol. One hundred and sixteen of them reached their target; thirteen planes were lost.

Reich Territory:

During the day and the night, only penetrations of isolated planes took place. In the evening, some bombs were dropped in the Rhinish-Westfalian industrial district.

Mediterranean Theater

On 26 Mar 18 JU "88" laid mines in the area off the beachhead. In the front area the enemy operated with 360 planes in supplying ground fighting and in destroying the supply routes.

Otherwise transportation installations and airfields in Central and Northern Italy were attacked by weak forces.

Two reconnaissance planes coming from the Russian area penetrated up to the Danube-delta and Constanța.

Mediterranean Theater.

On 27 Mar. some planes executed reconnaissance flights in the central Mediterranean.

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Eastern Area:

At the Eastern Front 1558 own and 785 enemy missions were counted on the 27 Mar. with eight of our own and 49 enemy planes lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0845 one convoy consisting of 31 freighters and light escort vessels passed Ceuta on course to the Mediterranean.

Own Situation:

One netlaying tender was escorted off the French South Coast. Otherwise no particular events were reported.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

At 0635 one cruiser, one transport, 20 freighters and 15-20 landing-craft were observed in the Bight of Anzio. Approaching convoys were escorted by minesweepers. Minesweeping was observed. One destroyer and three to four patrol vessels operated as cover forces. Our own air reconnaissance sighted three destroyers heading north in CJ 9472 at the northern coast of Sicily.

Aerial photographic reconnaissance detected two cruisers thereof one lying in the dock, two destroyers, one escort vessel, one patrol boat, two LST's, eight LCT's, eight freighters, lying in the harbor of Palermo. In Trapani there were no ships. In Marsalla the ships could not be recognized.

Own Situation:

Owing to weather conditions, the convoy and patrol duties were temporarily curtailed. During the night of 27 Mar. no minesweeping was carried out on our own barrages. Toward noon one of our own convoys was attacked by enemy fighter bombers off Cattolica. One tanker barge stranded.

In the gunfire on the harbor of Oneglia on 26 Mar. which was executed by an enemy submarine, the tanker MATRA (5011 BRT) was damaged.

With reference to the nights' getting shorter and shorter and the increasing aerial danger, the German Naval Command Italy applies for both a combined operation battalion equipped with vessels in order to reach the ports Civitavecchia and San Benedetto which are situated farther to the South.

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The Coastal Defense Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff took over further arrangements.

3. Area of the Naval Group South

a. Adriatic:

The submarine chaser "205" which escorted combined operations boats from Zara to Sibenik was annihilated by enemy fighter bomber raid in Sibenik. In the raid of 14 fighter bombers, the motor minesweeper R "191" burned out and was totally lost. The motor minesweeper R "188" was seriously and the motor minesweeper R "190" was slightly damaged. In Corcula two Inf.-boats were annihilated by air raid.

No reports were submitted on the situation of Hvar.

In addition to the above mentioned losses, the Admiral Adriatic reports that by that all vessels of 11th Coast Patrol Force being ready for action at this time were annihilated and the whole command area Adriatic is exposed of patrol vessels. The breakdowns are underlining - thus is reporting the Admiral Adriatic - for a new time the knowledge ever repeated and reported that no successful sea warfare in the Adriatic could be urged without sufficient fighter forces and that in consequence of that sea transportation will be stopped.

The Naval Staff informed the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Navy of this matter and remarks that the report of the Naval Group South saying that with the naval forces being available operations could be executed against Lissa in case that the required air forces would be disposed now would be very questionable. But however, it would be possible to prepare vessels now being out of war readiness in such a manner that they would be at disposal in right time and in suitable number.

b. Aegean:

At 0300 on 26 Mar. an enemy attempt of commander raid against the isle of Tilo north of Rhodes was repulsed. According to statement of one escaped partisan (Greece ships owner) in total 15 motor sailing ships thereof three Armed Forces vessels were captured by partisans and brought to Hermione. There the sailing ships were pillaged.

c. Black Sea:

Approximately 90 miles east of Constanta one enemy submarine was located. Our own air reconnaissance sighted four pontoons and 38 boats in the Bug-estuary south of Nicolaev. In Kerch-Straits, ferry traffic was observed protected by artificial smoke screen.

During the night of 27 Mar. the patrol line in Kerch-Straits off Eligen was shelled by enemy artillery. No damage and break-down was reported.

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On 22 and 26 Mar. the submarine U "24" shelled railway trains on the Caucasian coast and recognized hits. The convoy LOLA was attacked in vain off Cape San Georghe by enemy submarine. Owing to weather conditions, the submarine chasing could not be maintained.

The submarine U "20" returned from war cruise to Constanța.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance:

In the British Press, the question of Mr. Eden's resignation was discussed, to whom too much yielding towards Russia and the U.S. was reproached. The surprising speed of the Russians suddenly gave prominence to apprehension which arose from unsolved differences of opinion concerning the future confirmation of matters in reference to Russia as well as to the U.S. According to a source of the Intelligence Division especially valued trustworthy, best informed political and military circles of London were busy in discussing the question if a speedy start of the invasion would still yet have become necessary in order to regain the position of equivalent contracting party which was lost to the Russians in autumn 1943. Such precaution would have to be made in contrary to the now existing desire but is thought to be the only possibility to clear from the situation between Russia and the USA which was getting so critical for Great Britain. Hence, according to the same report, preparation should also be concluded in some degree up to at least 10 April. A neutral embassy also is judging that now the invasion into Western Europe should be expected still earlier than was presumed by reason of Italian set-backs in the end of January/the beginning of February. Neutral military attachés in London guess to the end of April/the beginning of May. At the same time one refers to the concentration of forces in North Africa and especially in Corsica, thus revealing a combined operation more and more. Also various visits of the Air Marshal Tedder to Gibraltar were interpreted in this direction.

According to report of the Naval Attaché Helsinki, Ramsay informed the German ambassador that Moscow - presumably on 23 March already - made known to the Finns that it would accept modifications. Thereupon a Finnish two-man delegation is said to have travelled to Stockholm authorized to receive the modification but not to conduct negotiations. From other sources the Naval Attaché has known that a three-men delegation really flew to Moscow via Stockholm.

Because the Russians withdrew several divisions from the front against the Finns and shifted them to the front against the Germans, the Military Attaché is proposing to urge the Finns into offensive activities which may engage forces.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that on 24 March four Siebel ferries were commissioned in Salonica.

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II. Report of the Chief of Foreign Affairs Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff on delivery of submarines of type VII c to Turkey for improving the clearing amount. The Commander in Chief, Navy decides that at this time no detailing of type VII c - boats comes in question because still now new boats are not available in the Mediterranean.

If type VII c - boats could be spared later on, they cannot be gathered just now. The question has to be submitted for decision in new and given time.

Further references see War Diary Part C Volume VIII.

In a highly restricted circle

III. Army Situation:

The Fuehrer agreed with the proposal of Field Marshal v.Kleist to build up a new defence front from Bug-mouth up to the Carpathian Mountains defending the Crimea with the Army Group A. Thereby the front sections would be distributed as follows: 6th Army Bug-mouth up to Pervomaisk, 8th Army in conjunction up to Mascaul-Jazzy. Then in conjunction the newly formed up 4th Romanian Army up to Lipcau. Then in conjunction the 1st Tank Army, 8th Army and 4th Romanian Army will be established as Army Group Woehper and subordinated to the Commanding General of the 3rd Romanian Army Colonel General Demitrescu. Further German Forces will be brought on from the Hungarian Area.

On the occasion of oral report to the Fuehrer, Field Marshal von Kleist declared the fact of actual holding of Odessa as very questionable and said in regard to the exposition on the importance of Odessa forwarded by the Naval Staff that the development of matters already had overcome beyond these desires of the Navy.

The situation of the 1st Tank Army is extremely difficult. The rupture to the West confronts the formation with an extraordinarily difficult task. There, ten of the best German Tank divisions and three to four other divisions are involved.

In Details Nicolaev has been evacuated.

Serious fighting kindled in the area east of Lemberg (Lwow). Our own attack operations in succouring the German troops which are encircled in Kovel is making good progress.

In Finland the Russians brought up three new divisions in the Kandalaksha sector.

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IV. According to instructions by the Armed Forces Operations Staff (Navy) the Field Marshal v. Kleist reported to the Fuehrer that due to the development of situation at the Army Group South, Odessa cannot be held any longer and proposed the withdrawal of the front west of Odessa. At first the Fuehrer only agreed with the withdrawal of the front to the bridgehead position of Odessa. But according to the opinion of the Op (M) Navy representative, this would only be valued as delaying measure.

The Field Marshal v. Kleist described the situation of Odessa, indicating that numerous factories and repair shops would have transferred already or would be in dismantling stage, thus creating the impression that also naval dockyards and repair shops would be either in thinning-up or transference stage or already not fully fit for work any more, at the least being mature for dismantling in a few days. In connexion with Odessa, the Field Marshal v. Kleist proposed to evacuate the Crimea in time until Odessa would still be our own. But the Fuehrer wanted to hold the Crimea as long as ever possible. The Admiral attached to the Fuehrer's Headquarters and the Navy representative directing his attention to the decisive reaction of the Odessa-evacuation, the Field Marshal v. Kleist put up his opinion that even without Odessa the Crimea could be held for a long time. The Chief of Operations Staff of the Army Group A declared that yet 35,000 tons monthly would still be supplied from Constanta. Obviously no clear idea is existing at the Army Group on the real development of sea transportation after evacuating Odessa.

The Fuehrer ordered a quick investigation how the harbor and the approaches of Odessa could be thoroughly destroyed and made unserviceable if possible occasionally by effort of the new firing unit.

In answering the last point, the Group South reported that the Dockyard Control Staff of the Admiral Black Sea is in continuous connection with the Army Group A. Work pieces, the production of which would be possible up to 2 April, and the installations required for that remained in Odessa. All the others were carried off unfinished in using the empty tonnage to a far extent. All the machinery, tools and equipment which are not required were dismantled. According to the report of the Dockyard Control Staff, the salvage will be executed as far as possible.

Moreover, the Group South was requested for report explaining which reaction the break-down of the Odessa repair port would effect on the task of the group in the Black Sea and whether the dockyard capacity which is still existing would be sufficient for the demands on repair work still coming.

Concerning the new firing units, the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff Navy has been informed as follows:

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a. Firing the DME* - requires high speed, therefore fully unsuited for minelaying in harbor.

b. The AA-devices* are technically highly complicated, may only be installed in LMB,* are requiring six days rest after planting before they switch to fuse and have to be installed by experts of the Mining and Barrage Trials Command, otherwise many misfires.

c. The MA-devices* are just as sore and complicated and have to be overhauled after transportation.

d. Transportation of mines into the area of Odessa would rather be impossible. One must supply with the stocks laying in Sevastopol and Constanța.

V. On 27 March, the Fuehrer informed the Commander in Chief, Navy by phone that according to statement of Field Marshal v.Kleist the evacuation of Odessa has already been started by the Navy.

Inquired thereupon, the Group South reported that by reason of the directive of the Naval Staff with date of 13 March (evacuate Nicolaev, thin up Odessa) this kind of precautions for thinning out Odessa had been made which seemed to be necessary for support and evacuation of those installations of which the transportation would not be possible in short time. Thereby all the installations required for maintaining the supply traffic Constanța - Odessa - Crimea inclusively the repair efficiencies needed for that were excepted distinctly. In view of the continuous unfavorable development in the South of the Eastern Front, the Group ordered speeding up and concentration of the evacuation precautions on 15 March for not being surprised by the events. Additionally to that the Group remarks that difficulties and the amount of time for evacuation of naval installations could not be estimated by the Army. On inquiry the Dockyard Control Staff reported that evacuation measures are executing in full agreement with the Army Group A.

The orders issued by the Army Group A are running as follows:

1. To Admiral Black Sea on 13 March:

Make immediate starting of naval evacuation of Odessa except installations needed there for army purposes. Continue shipping Odessa-Nicolaev and Odessa-Crimea as long as possible. Maintain repair shops in Odessa so far that execution of ship-repairs happening in sea transportation to and from Odessa would be possible.

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In its time the Operations Branch, Naval Staff overread the last sentence of this directive.

2. To the Admiral Black Sea on 15 March:

In the present situation, the possibility of holding Odessa seems to be limited facing to the probability of sudden surrender. Must be considered according to the speed and extent of the evacuation measures. Concerning the necessity of provisional management, apply the strictest standard. Safeguarding of precious material is more important than temporary difficulties. Prepare mine infection of the harbor of Odessa.

This directive was overread by the Operations Branch, Naval Staff on 15 March.

By reason of this report, the Commander in Chief, Navy conferred with the Commanding General, Army Group South by phone and approved the decided precautions of the Group as relevant to the development of the situation.

The Commanding General, Army Group South has been requested to secure the information of the Naval Staff on measures which are so incisive and reaching beyond the directive of the Naval Staff.

In Details the Group South is reporting, that during the last days 950 tons and 36 machines were sent off by the naval shops in Odessa and still 160 machines are waiting for transportation which partially are already going to be removed. Owing to bad weather conditions and the lack of tugs, further transport is curtailed. For thinning up Odessa, the army applied for 45,000 tons of shipping space. Transfer has already been started.

Written confirmation of the trunk-call between Commander in Chief, Navy - Commanding General Group South and reference as per 1/Skl 959/44 Gkdos Chfs. in War Diary Part C Book XIV. a.

The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Navy has been informed of the settling of this matter. Reference 1/Skl I a 975/44 Gkdos Chfs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

Special Items:

I. The Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, Navy reports the aggravation of the situation of the Northern Front of the Army Group A. At the Group South, the enemy has further advanced against the Romanian

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and Hungarian Defense Forces. Incisive measures for forming up new Front were ordered by Marshal Antonescu. In a letter to the Fuehrer the Marshal emphasizes the necessity of speedy Crimea evacuation so long as Odessa still is ours.

In connection with the enemy attack to be expected at the Finnish Front new political pressure against Finland is counted on. In the Armed Forces High Command tokens are indicating that unofficial negotiations of the Finns with the Russians are still going on.

In this connexion, maintaining of preparations for operation "Tanne" are necessary.

No new statements were submitted on Hungary.

II. The Radio transmitted directive to the Commanding Admiral Aegean and the Admiral Adriatic concerning the order to the German Air Force Command South East for preparations and employment of the German Air Force in event of enemy large scale attack at the Balkans was overread by the Group South. Thereof is revealing that no bringing up of new anti aircraft forces will be expected and that the German Air Force will be compelled to operate with its own forces available in this area in concentrating them on focal points for securing its operational bases thus enabling Air Force operations after all. A part of these transferring measures will be executed just now as immediate precaution and independently from issuing the keyword. The Commanding Admirals have to act according to this necessity by relevant measures by their own powers such as thinning up, camouflage etc.

III. Additional statements have been made on the report of the Lieutenant (Naval Artillery) Schneider who was appointed for the special operation "Frechdachs" in the Adriatic in regard to the non participation of the German Air Force. Relevant correspondence is to be found with date of 23 March in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

IV. Concerning the Naval Emergency units, the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff issued the following order:

1. "The organization and allocation of the Naval Emergency units is continuing as before. Dividing of Naval Emergency units in the home area as of degrees of priority A, B and C. The present strength of the degree A at the Naval Command East amounts approximately to 11000,

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at the Naval Command North to approximately 3500 men. Therein is containing an overwhelming number of Naval Emergency units of replacement, training, instruction units and schools.

2. As to the Fuehrer's decision, the release of Naval Emergency units composed by replacement, training and instruction units and schools for far distant operations only by order of the Fuehrer by the Naval Staff.

3. If this order of the Fuehrer is not to be issued but far distant operations of the remaining alarm-detachments of the home area are not to be ordered, then the Naval Staff will make the calling-up by marking numbers or will order the total strength of the remaining alarm-detachments of the degree A which is known here to far distant operations. At any rate, to exclude errors and far distant operations of Naval Emergency units of the replacement, instruction and training units and schools without distinct order of the Fuehrer, the Naval Staff will always clearly refer to the issued order of the Fuehrer.

4. Consequently, the issued directives on preparations which are to be made and the proceedings of calling-up will remain in existence. For the next time, the Naval Command North and East are securing that the Naval Staff will be continuously informed on the allocations and the strength of the Naval Emergency units.

V. By reason of the lecture of the Quartermaster General, Naval Staff on the memoir of the Commanding Admiral Group West concerning the construction of armoured PT-boats, conclusively the Commander in Chief, Navy decided that the construction of these vessels would not come into consideration. Copy of the oral report has been made as per 1/Skl III a 9461/44. Copy in War Diary Part B Volume V.

VI. Instruction of the highest Operations Staffs of the Navy etc. on the enemy situation in the Northern Area and the British Isles and vicinity has been made by the Naval Intelligence Division on 28 March. Copy as per 1/Skl 9626/44 Gkdos in War Diary Part D Volume "records on the enemy situation."

Concerning the Northern Area, it is said to be possible that the reported entering of eleven respectively four merchantmen in Reykjavik on 18 or 22 March resp. may indicate to the beginning concentration of PQ 31. But it is not impossible that the PQ-traffic would be temporarily suspended perhaps in connection with the at this time increased navigation on the North-Atlantic route or in connexion with

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concentration of ships for invasion purposes in the area of the British Isles. In the year before too the last QP started from Reykjavik on 20 February.

A judgment of the increasing supply traffic on the North Atlantic route to Great Britain as to 60% recognized since the second part of February will only be but possible when relevant observations would be made for return shipping.

Situation 28 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group eight, at the 19th Group were only twelve planes at the Azores Squadrons two planes were detected on mission. Two British vessels and one Allied vessel was located in the rendezvous area.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept off Royan, two off the Gironde and three off La Pallice.

Four submarines were escorted entering and three leaving the harbor.

The Group West received the following directive of the Naval Staff:

1. "During the last days the enemy has repeatedly attacked submarine convoys with bombs and gunfire on their scheduled channels. Owing to serious gunfire, one boat was lost and another suffered casualties.

2. These repeated attacks make arguing new enemy tactics. The Commander Submarines, West already was ordered by the Submarine Division, Naval Staff to secure increased defense power of the convoys

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in cooperation with the Air Commander Atlantic Coast and the Commanding Admiral Defenses West.

3. Group West is to investigate the decided precautions in total and report plans."

Channel Area:

One mine was swept west of Ostende.

During the night of 27 March, the operation of the 2nd, 4th and 8th PT-boat Flotillas with twelve boats sent out for capturing enemy PT-boats from lurking position off the Dutch coast yielded no result.

The torpedo operation planned during the night of 28 March with the 4th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas against the East or West-bound convoys in Lyme or Plymouth-Bay was curtailed owing to bad visibility.

At 2030 the transfer of the steamer DERINDJE from St. Malo to Morlaix has been started. Besides, the torpedoboats T "29," KONDOR and JAGUAR put out to Jersey and the T "27," GREIF and MOEVE from Cherbourg to St. Malo.

Special Items:

The High Command Navy, Recruitment Division charged the Group West with the execution of the ordered transfer of the Naval Drafting Detachments being in France in the area of Epinal and Belfort to the area of the railroad Metz-Paris and gave the instruction to make preparation as quickly as possible.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

North Sea:

Convoy, minesweeping and clearing duties were carried through as planned. Four mines were swept off the Dutch coast and five ones in the Heligoland Bight.

The convoy 1235 Hook-Elbe has been executed. The convoy 489 Elbe-Hook temporarily touched Borkum and proceeded to the west.

Approximately 17.000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Zee and in the Zealand Waters.

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Norway, Northern Waters

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group twelve planes were detected over the central North Sea. At 1230 one British vessel was inaccurately located west of Haugesund.

Within the Poljarnoje port wave radius, the destroyer "E" was at sea. Switching Danilow light house at 1700 on 28 March makes counting on shipping in Gorlo-Straits.

2. Own Situation:

On 27 March unimportant enemy air activity was reported from the area of the Polar Coast. During the night of 28 March, the coastal anti-submarine listening station Nurmansetti reported enemy PT-boats showing to the West.

At 0300 the steamer LUISE LEONHARDT (4816 BRT) ran ashore in Ulvesund.

Thirty five northbound and 31 southbound ships were escorted.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 29 boats, in the Baltic Sea 30 boats and eight minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. Nine mines were swept in the Kiel Bay and Fehmarn-Belt, in Samsøe-Belt one mine was swept.

Convoys were carried through without incidents.

The Group North/Fleet reported that the 1st PT-boat training Flotilla after having concluded its training, was retransferred from Oslofjord to the home area. No one can estimate when new PT-boat flotillas would be sent into the area of the Skagerrak. Presumably this would not be possible before May 1944 by the PT-Boat Training Flotilla because the PT-Boat Training Flotilla and the Practice-Flotillas are tied to Swinemunde during three months of training.

The 6th PT-boat Flotilla is executing exercises and gunnery training with eight boats west of the channel "Orange."

During the night of 25 March and 26 March, the nightfighter directing ship TOGO reports the dropping of enemy light buoys over the ship.

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One nightfighter was put at disposal of this ship.

In strengthening the anti-aircraft defense for the netlayers, the patrol boat "307" has been set up on "Orange" channel. Netlaying duties are continued.

Our own boats being at sea south of Tyters were continuously attacked by enemy planes just as all the time before.

Regarding the Army situation, the Admiral Baltic Countries reports that the northern Part of the Westsack has been fully closed in spite of strong counter attacks of new forces and attempts of breaking through were prevented.

V. Submarine Warfare:

No special events.

The Naval Attaché Tokyo received the instruction to ask the Japanese Admiralty Staff for information of the Commander in Chief, Navy for transmitting the experiences which were made with USA-submarines, their tactics and manner of attack operations in Chinese and Japanese waters, as for instance details on spread salvo and timing of attack operations.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

From 1100 - 1125 numerous enemy planes were observed off the Belgian coast. Presumably minelaying. Some hundred planes operated single-handed and in small groups with fighter cover in the area of Belgium-Northern France. Strong group with fighter cover attacked airfields in Western France. A number of our own planes were destroyed. In total seven enemy planes were shot down. No enemy air activity was reported during the night of 28 March.

Reich Territory:

During the day, isolated enemy planes were observed in the western and northwestern part of Germany, obviously in doing reconnaissance tasks.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 27 March the enemy attacked railroad installations and airfields in Central and Northern Italy. Two freighters and two fishing boats

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were attacked by fighter bombers south of Rimini. In the Front Area and in the beachhead, 670 enemy planes operated against our own positions and supply roads. One enemy fighter was shot down and four of our own planes were lost.

At 2100 on 28 March, one convoy was detected with Radar set north of Oran. At 2230 one steamer of 10,000 BRT was reported north of Tenes without indication of course.

East Area:

On 27 March 1327 of our own and 1280 enemy planes were on missions at the Eastern Front; 13 of our own and 31 enemy planes were lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

At 1000 one enemy submarine was sighted off Toulon which shot a four-spread torpedo salvo failure on the submarine chaser "6073." Submarine chasing gave no results.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 27 March, our own air reconnaissance detected by devices and sightings busy shipping off the Sardinian East coast. Also south of Cape Circeo ten ships presumably an entering convoy were detected by Radar set.

On 28 March the amount of shipping in Anzio harbor and roads was found to be very strong.

According to report of the Intelligence Division, the amount of shipping in Brindisi was very strong on 24 March. Allegedly there were two auxiliary aircraft carriers, one cruiser, six torpedo-boats, five small war vessels, three tankers and eighteen transports lying in the harbor.

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During the night of 27 March, destroyers and PT-boats were repeatedly detected south of Ancona.

According to the Turkish Press, one unknown submarine is to have sunk a Turkish motor boat in the Gulf of Iskenderum.

No one of our own submarines comes into question.

Own Situation:

At 0125 on 27 March, one of our own naval landing craft - convoys was attacked with five torpedoes by five enemy PT-boats south of Sestri Levante. One PT-boat was shot afire and presumably annihilated.

During the night of 27 March, four naval landing craft proceeding from Leghorn - Stefano are overdue.

On the evening of 27 March, the SG "15" and the submarine chaser "2221" were continuously located on their way to the patrol duties. At 2057 on 27 March, the boats shelled a PT-boat which was shoving off north-west of Leghorn. At 2325 three PT-boats replied the recognition-signal call with two torpedo misfires and went off after having fired on.

During the night of 27 March, landing and embarkation of own shock detachments at the isle of Gorgona by three motor minesweepers was carried through as planned.

Owing to break down of the compass device at the TA-boat (torpedoboat) the minelaying operation "Knick" was postponed again.

The submarine U "421" reported the successful breaking through into the Mediterranean.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

At Hvar our own troops advancing to the West met enemy positions.

"On 27 March the submarine chaser "205" was set aground by fighter bomber attack.

During the night of 26 March, two Siebel Ferries and two Inf.-boats transferred troops to Hvar and Brac.

In the hours of dawn, the operation "Biber" has been executed as planned by RAMB "III" and R "4".

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In regard to the report of the Admiral Adriatic on the break-down of the naval defense forces (see War Diary 27 March), the Group South states:

"1. Owing to complete air supremacy of the enemy in the Dalmatian coastal area practically depending on the lack of own fighter forces and any anti aircraft artillery defenses of ports, each operation of war vessels or transports practically is the same as annihilation. As proved true, camouflaged berths too do not offer shelter because the enemy air force discovers the vessels in low level flight. Up to now, applies for bringing up fighter and anti aircraft forces obtained no results.

2. The break-down of vessels already assumed unbearable extents so that the Admiral is no more able to achieve his defense tasks. Therefore was ordered:

a. Employment of war vessels for militarily important operations only.

b. Previously, suspend the escort of sea transportation south of Zara so long until a scanty protection of the vessels could be afforded by our own fighter or anti aircraft artillery forces.

c. Furthermore, radical shifting of the supply to land routes is required.

3. The Naval Staff is requested to speed up the supply of PT-boats, naval landing craft, motor minesweepers and corvettes which are provided for the Adriatic.

b. Aegean:

At 2130 one enemy submarine attacked ships which were lying in the harbor of Monemvasia. The minetender MT "3" has been annihilated. One second torpedo detonated at the rocky coast. At 2147 presumably the same submarine attacked the submarine chaser "2152."

The towed convoy with the PT-boats S "601" and S "603" entered Patras coming from Corfu.

c. Black Sea:

On the afternoon of 27 March, one plane escorting the convoy steamer TOTILA attacked an enemy submarine approximately ESE of Constanța without recognized effect.

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Owing to weather conditions, the convoy steamer "TOTILA" with war transport "25" has been transferred from Constanța to Varna and entered there in the afternoon. The ship "19" from the escort of this convoy stranded six miles south of Constanța. The crew was rescued. During the night of 27 March, in proceeding from Sevastopol to Constanța the convoy BAYREUTH lost its unity. Escort vessels reported their positions, position of steamer BAYREUTH is unknown.

At 2000 on 26 March, one naval landing craft shortly recognized a fast going enemy boat in the Dnieper-Liman patrol area.

During the night of 27 March, the special operations group Dnieper interrupted the patrol duties and entered at Ochakov for evacuating of most important material. At 0430 the naval landing craft left Odessa-bound after being loaded.

During the night of 26 March, the naval landing craft of the Kerch Straits patrol line were shelled by artillery off Cape Tuzla, but did not suffer any break-down.

On the morning of 26 March, the Naval battery in position on Kerch-Straits shelled the steam pile-driver working at the aerial tramway. The fire was replied by an enemy battery. Besides, Kamysh Barun was shelled with 12 - 17 cm enemy battery with altogether 110 rounds supported by plane reconnaissance.

Owing to weather conditions, our own forces were not employed during the night of 28 March. Convoys were postponed.

The Admiral Black Sea temporarily cancelled the order for keeping available 1/3 of tonnage in Sevastopol because at present the Crimea is firmly in our position.

With radiogram 1723 the Naval Liaison Staff Romania reports to the Admiral Black Sea that today the Romanian General Staff issued the evacuation order II for Galati and the dockyards lying east of it. Consequences are ceasing work and evacuation of all machinery. With the date of 29 March, the Romanians ask for the evacuation of the iron dock which is absolutely necessary for the submarine-base. At any case, the execution of this precaution has to be prevented.

According to another overread radiogram, the Admiral Black Sea projected Sulina as isolated base for PT-boats, depending on the development of the situation.

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Besides, the Admiral Black Sea instructed the Naval Shore Commander Ukraine to bring the 6th Army's attention to the fact that after withdrawal of the army coastal artillery, the coastal defense of the Dnieper-Liman could not be guaranteed by the naval landing craft because the rupture through Ochakov-narrows during the now beginning moon clear nights are very questionable without suppressing the enemy battery at Kinnburn.

On inquiry of the Naval Staff concerning the billeting numbers of ships (see War Diary 20 March), the Admiral Black Sea previously reports that the numbers reported on 6 November 1943 were reckoned out under the assumption of suitable billeting involved by the embarrassing situation and under any cession of hygiene. Superficial tests at the steamer LOLA confirmed the reported number. Result of further checking would be reported.

From other Radiograms in the Black Sea the directive of the Commanding Admiral Black Sea to the 10th Coast Patrol Force and to the Naval Shore Commander Ukraine is noticeable which is aimed at rigid and speedy issuing of orders.

As main task of the Admiral Black Sea was announced:

- a. Supply of the Crimea.
- b. Supply and thinning up transports at the west coast.
- c. Defense of war bases and coasts.
- d. Defense of the sea areas against the enemy naval surface and submerged forces.

The order is concluding:

"Since months the situation in the Black Sea has not changed. To the Navy there is consideration to be influenced by the nervous state which somewhat appeared at other Services."

The Group South informed the Naval Staff with copy from the directive issued to the Admiral Black Sea concerning the defense of further Crimea supply by keeping enemy naval forces out of the NW-corner of the Black Sea. For this must be planned the minelaying in the coastal forwarded area under changing respectively completion of former plannings with barrages almost not suitable for sweeping, thoroughly making unserviceable of port installations and close infection of port basins and canals and preparations of PT-boats bases as well as submarine employments

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for offensively conducted defense of sea routes in the North-West basin and stopping the bringing up of enemy naval forces into it. Besides this, the German Air Force's attention is to be directed towards the necessity of minelaying and bombing the harbor installations of Odessa-Perecop.

Similar precautions for closing the Danube down the river from Galati are projected if the situation would produce further setbacks.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance

In regard to the rumors of transformation of the British Cabinet, the Baseler Nachrichten reports from London that the present campaign against Eden appears to be the reaction of the Conservatives against the course of the Government's Foreign Policy since Teheran. Criticism nominally is directed against Eden and is aiming de facto at Churchill too. Hence many facts from his speech on 27 March are explaining themselves. In well-informed circles of London one does not believe that a new transformation of the Cabinet would be imminent or that Churchill even would only think to give way to this pressure and change the course of Foreign Policy.

In inspecting the assault weapons, the Commander in Chief, Navy is absent from Headquarters. Records of the result written by the Chief of Surface Vessel Constructional Planning Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff who participated is found in copy as per 1/Skl III a 9659/44 Gkdos. in War Diary Part B Volume V.

The Commander in Chief, Navy decided that the construction of "Bunteboats"* and "Neger"* is immediately to be begun with. The "Thomas II"* and "Loedicke"* - boat are to be developed further on.

Conference on the situation with the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff

I. From the report on the situation issued by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West, noticeable effects of enemy sabotage activities are revealing. In the southwestern part of France, industry has been nearly paralysed. The power supply of Paris already is exposed to restrictions.

In a highly restricted circle:

II. Army Situation:

In serious fighting, the Army Group A has defeated enemy attempts of rupture from the area southeast of Balta. Enemy bridgeheads west of the Dniester were enlarged unessentially. North of Stefaneseu several new enemy bridgeheads are being formed across the Pruth River.

At the Army Group B, the stronghold Tarnopol is engaged in serious defense fighting. The situation is very strained. The Army

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Group Center reports hard but successful defense fighting at the 4th Army and the 3rd Tank Army. The Army Group North estimates the enemy forces enclosed at the Narva Front up to several divisions. At the Finland-Front more large scale enemy attack preparations in the Louhia-sector were recognized.

In details additionally was reported that Kolomyja was captured by the enemy. At their first contact with the enemy, the Hungarian forces withdrew.

By reason of an information of the Army Headquarters 17 is following from a report of the Admiral Black Sea to the Group South that the evacuation of Nicolaev has begun during the night of 28 March and that the occupation of the new front of the 6th Army would be accomplished within seven days if all is going on as planned.

The Liaison Officer/Army reports from the record Foreign Armies East on inner Russian conditions. Striking is the fact of strong stress laid on the resumption of ancient partiality of tsaristic traditions in the Army.

In Italy new enemy attack is expected from the beachhead.

At the Balkans, Tito is moving with two divisions for meeting Bulgarian communists in the area of Nish-Toplica. Against these, the Bulgarians are bringing up forces only slowly in spite of personal intervention of the Commanding General of the Army Group E.

III. The Operations Division, Naval Staff is considering to use the present political situation in Finland in order to accomplish the occupation of the Aland Isles already now in secret, occasionally with the agreement of the Finns. For that, the consent of the High Command, Army and the approaching to the Finnish Armed Forces Command via the High Command, Army would be required. At any rate, the Commander, Minesweepers East is to find out if or in how far ports of the Aland Islands already have been touched by our own naval forces or supply vessels and what reaction is dared to be expected on adequate measures. But essential doubts are arising against a step at Finland via the High Command, Army which could make the execution of the occupation of the isles very questionable. Certainly the danger is existing that in considering political points of view this would lead to consequences which would not harmonize with the military requirements.

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Therefore the Operations Branch, Naval Staff proposes not to approach the High Command, Army/Operations Staff at first but to wait for the statements made by the Commander Minesweepers East. Possibly these statements would allow to reach the aim fully underhanded and harmless in gradually developing forward a situation already existing.

The inquiry passed to the Commander, Minesweepers East with copy to the Naval Command Baltic tunes [is worded] as follows:

"1. With continuing aggravation or longer lasting of the icing condition in the Gulf of Finland, withdrawal of naval forces to the West could become necessary according to our opinion here and owing to aerial danger for some ports. Answer the following question for the Naval Staff by the Commander Minesweepers East.

a. Which port of the Aland Islands had been touched by German Naval forces or supply vessels up to now?

b. Did this touching of ports occur regularly during longer periods?

c. When did German Naval forces and supply ships touch ports of the Aland Islands for the last time?

d. Did German naval forces use supply and repair facilities of the Finns in these ports?

e. Do German merchantmen touch ports of the Aland Islands regularly or temporarily?

f. Which reaction of the Finns could be expected in the present situation, according to the opinion of the Commander Minesweepers East, if German naval forces occasionally would touch Mariehamn or other ports of the Aland Islands?

2. Special attention is directed towards the secret of these reflections."

IV. On 24 March the Naval Command Norway applied for suspending of the minelaying project NW "69" in Rognfiord which was already approved in October 1943 by the Naval Staff as to the Barrage "NW 104" in Altafiord reinforcements in Rognsund would not be necessary any more.

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In spite of doubts uttered by the Commander Inshore Defenses Unit, the Group North/Fleet joined this application.

But, by reason of the particular responsibility for the security of the Inshore Defense Unit with which he was charged, the Commander Inshore Defense Unit is applying for clutching to the project "NW 69" because the barrage "NW 104" neither could hinder advancing enemy forces from taking effective firing position against Kaafjord nor could protect the own area of exercises in the northern Altafiord.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff is proposing the following decision:

"As the defense precautions of the Altafiord approaches were established in such a manner that the tributary airways would be unusable for the enemy, and the blocking of Rognsund would be but effective under certain conditions and in regard to the exercise area in the northern part of the Altafiord, it is decided that, in spite of the lack of mines, the minelaying project "NW 69" would have to be carried out as additional defense of the main base of the fleet."

The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff gave his consent.

Special Items

I. From the information on the situation of the Armed Forces Operations Staff (Navy):

"From Hungary no new reports. Except the five Hungarian Divisions already mobilized, the mobilization of three more was ordered. The impression is existing that, in regard to the development of situation in the East, the Hungarian Armed Forces would be ready for decisive fighting under close German command:

The newest development of the attitude of Finland requires speedy conclusion of the preparations for "Tanne."

II. In the overread Radiogram 1110 from Group South to the Commanding Admiral Black Sea, this one was informed in condensed manner of the instruction concerning the oral report of Field Marshal von Kleist to the Fuehrer with reference to the opposition of this instruction with the judgment of situation made by the Army Group A.

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The instruction which the Group South is transmitting by Radio was addressed by the Operations Division, Naval Staff to the Group South, for the Commanding Admiral. In regard to this, the Group South is requested for information which Headquarters could overread and decypher the Radiogram 1110. Telegram of the Group as per 1/Sk1 994/44 Gkdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV. a.

III. Regarding to the evacuation order of the Romanian General Staff for Galati and the dockyards situated east of it, the Group South is reporting that up to now attempts of the Naval Liaison Staff Romania for cancelling this evacuation order or retaining the dock in Galati failed. The evacuation of machinery river upwards has begun. Thereby repair capacity is restricted incisively. For a new time, the Group South is trying via the Naval Liaison Staff and the Commanding General South-East to direct the evacuation of machinery and dock to Constanța. As to its own opinion this kind of radical measures is not justified and the above-mentioned attempts only promising unimportant results, the Group is requesting to decide or effect occasionally the following on higher ranks:

- a. Stopping of evacuation by Romanians
- b. at least erection of German installations evacuated from Odessa in Galati or Braila,
- c. If stopping will turn out impossible, evacuation of Romanian installations to Constanța, because owing to imminent Danube blockings and water depths above Braila repair facilities for sea shipping would entirely fall out of action.

Further arrangements will be made, by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

In the overread Radiogram 1645 to the Group South, the Admiral Black Sea is reporting to the same question that the dockyard of Constanța is employed to the most part with repairs of the Romanian naval forces and Varna in its present condition is only suitable for restricted repairs on naval landing craft and armed fishing vessels. The remaining capacity of Constanța and the repair facilities of Sevastopol are far beyond being sufficient for repairs and continuous overhauling of the naval forces and supply vessels additionally dropping in. Therefore extending of

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Varna is urgently necessary.

IV. Regarding the operation "Tanne", the High Command, Army/Operations Staff Navy communicates that partial motorization of the 416th Infantry Division is desired. At first the division will be fully equipped with bicycles. Two hundred lorries are in mobilization.

V. In regard to Gisela (neu), the Group West is reporting with 26 March that the preparations of the army practically are restricted to the occupation of a bridgehead south of the Pyrenees which would be limited with Santander, Valladolid - Soria. The Commanding General's, Armed Forces, West point of view is that with these planned six divisions an operation going far beyond that aim would only become possible then when Spain would become European Theater of main concentration of war under far-reaching deprivation of the French coast. The Group South is requesting consent that at this situation the planning for Gisela (neu) must be only extended to the coastal sector Hendaye-Santander, what all the more would be desirable as the disposition of forces from the French area is meeting large difficulties.

The Naval Staff agreed with the proposal saying that the planings would be restricted corresponding to the preparation of the Army to the coastal sector from Hendaye to Santander. Copy of adequate draught as per 1 Skl 941/44 Gkdos Chefs. in War Diary filing "Enemy large scale landing operations."

VI. Owing to the reports submitted by the Naval Command East and North, the Quartermaster Division decides that the former limits of area of the Naval Commands concerning the defense of the Kiel-Canal will be kept. Single organizational precautions, for instance changes in the subordination, have to be applied for in reciprocal terms. The Naval Command North and East receive the directive to make immediate contact with the officials which are charged with the defense of the Kiel-Canal by the Chief of the Bureau of Army Armament and the Commander in Chief, Air Force and the Reichsfuehrer SS in sense of the issued Fuehrer directive and report the result.

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VII. The application submitted by the Naval Command Norway (see War Diary 23 March) was decided by the Naval Staff as follows:

"1. Allocation of the requested four PT-boats respectively motor minesweepers is not possible.

2. The main weapon of the PT-boats is the offensive torpedo operation. For this, no favorable suppositions would appear in the Polar area, especially during the period of clearness and by the small number of boats. The number of front-boats and the strength of the enemy defense is requiring the farthest possible concentration in the West Area.

3. The tasks mentioned in the reference especially the fighting against enemy PT-boats, motor minesweepers are mostly suited. But withdrawal of boats from other areas outside of Norway in favor to the Polar Coast is not possible owing to the lack of patrol vessels at every place.

VIII. On application of the Group South, the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff is approving the subordination of the 1st PT-boat-force with the 3rd, 7th and 24th PT-boat Flotillas branched off as to discipline and supplies and as to operational matters under the Commanding Admiral Adriatic, before branching off the authorized Commander was the Commander PT-boats and the subordination of the 10th Landing Flotilla as to operational matters and branched off as to discipline and supply under the chief of sea transportation Adriatic. Before branching off the authorized Commander is the Admiral Landing Craft and Bases. The Area Commander in this case the Admiral Adriatic, is authorized to change the subordination as to operational matters for the length of this special operation.

IX. The German Naval Command Italy applied for the equipment of two vessels as Q-ships. Principally the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff approved the conditioning in spite of only small prospects for success in regard to the serious danger by enemy planes and if the execution would be possible without restricting other constructional projects. Torpedo outfit is not approved. Complements have to be put at disposal without additional requests on personnel from the area of the German Naval Command Italy.

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Situation 29 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group six, at the 19th Group were only five and at the Azores Squadrons equally five planes were detected on missions. Two British vessels were located west of Gibraltar and in the outer Biscay Bay. On 28 and 29 March exercises, presumably landing exercises, were observed in the western Channel Area where 16 leaders of boat-formations participated in the wireless communications.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

One mine each was swept in the area of Bayonne, La Pallice and le Verdon, three mines were swept in the area of the Gironde. Blocking of Gironde estuary was released. The steamer DERINDJE, in escort of six boats of the 10th Minesweeping Flotilla, is transferring for employment in ore shipping from St. Malo via Morlaix to Bordeaux. At 0505 the convoy weighed anchor west of Les Sept Iles owing to fog.

At 0400 the Commander of the 4th Torpedo-Boat Flotilla with T "29," KONDOR and JAGUAR anchored off Jersey, the Commander of the 5th Torpedo-Boat Flotilla with T "27," GREIF and MOEVE anchored off St. Malo at 0630. The transfer of both the flotillas to Brest is projected during the night of 30 March.

Channel Area:

At 0243 the 2nd Gun Carrier Flotilla came in touch with eight or nine enemy PT-boats off Dieppe, of which two were sunk and another one was thought to be sunk. Besides this, essential damage was remarked on further boats. All our own boats are ready for action, slight casualties.

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On the occasion of the two successes obtained during the last time the Commander in Chief, Navy expressed his acknowledgment to the 2nd Gun-Carrier Flotilla.

Owing to locations, our own coastal batteries shelled three salvoes of harassing fire in the area of Dieppe-Le Treport at 0344.

Owing to mine detonation, the minesweeper M "4600" sunk off St. Malo.

During the night of 29 March, torpedo operations of the 2nd, 4th, and 8th PT-boat Flotillas are planned against southbound convoys in the area of Smith' Knoll.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

North Sea:

Escort, minesweeping and patrol duties were carried through as planned. Four mines were swept in the area of Heligoland.

Approximately 44000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Sea and in the Zealand Waters. Attacks of PT-boats against the minesweeping escort of the convoy 489 at 0235 and 0448 in AN 8534 respectively 8556 were repulsed.

At 1700 40 enemy planes attacked the Elbe-Ems shipping with bombs and air torpedoes NW of Borkum. The steamer CHRISTEL VINNER (1900 BRT) sunk, the steamer HERMANN SCHULTE (1300 BRT) was seriously damaged. Certainly two planes were shot down, a third one was possibly shot down.

The Counter Intelligence Section, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command reports in regard to the Operation West that at present two smacks are operating from Esbjerg, of which one is at sea. A third smack is to be operated from Hirtshals. The employment of seven more cutters, mostly sea-going vessels, is planned. According to the opinion of the Counter Intelligence Section, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command the guaranty dared to be given in employing the smacks in the usual fishing areas of the Danish fishermen to receive informations of special enemy intentions which would aim at an invasion in direction of Denmark and South Norway immediately. Up to now there was stated that British PT-boats and patrol boats are coming in touch with Danish fishing smacks at the Dogger Bank.

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But this getting into contact seemed to be restricted on barter dealings and questions of common character dealing with the conditions in Denmark. But the British fighting ships do not trouble the Danish fishermen in any form all the more these rescued British airmen and handed them over to the British. [Translated by Op-292A: The English war ships disturb the Danish fishermen in no wise, especially since these repeatedly rescue English fliers and hand them over to the English.] Crashed own airmen are brought back to the Danish coast. Leading Danish shipowners are interested in fishing outside the declared area because then they could recognize any tokens of invasion in earliest time. Hereby they for themselves are much interested in order to safeguard their very precious material of nets and vessels. The Counter Intelligence Section Denmark was ordered to inform the local headquarters of the Navy continuously on all particular knowledge from these operations.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 32 planes were detected over the northern North Sea up to the West Coast of Norway.

2. Own Situation:

At 2115 on 28 March, the troop transport ALKAID (5483 BRT) ran aground south-west of Loedingen and came free again at 0100 on 29 March and continued her course.

On the afternoon of 28 March, 19 enemy planes were reported in the area of Askevold-Aalesund which did not carry out any attacks.

In the area of the West coast, the steamer ANTJE FRITZEN (6582 BRT) also ran temporarily aground in Hjeltefjord. The ship had to be towed in. The steamer "LUISE LEONHARDT" which ran aground on 28 March in Ulvesund, came free again with only slight damage. Both, 26 ships were escorted to the North and South.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

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2. Own Situation:

In the Baltic Sea Entrances 28 boats, in the Baltic Sea 25 boats and nine minesweeping aircraft were engaged in minesweeping.

Four mines were swept in Kiel Bay. After having struck a mine, the steamer SPREE was towed in to Kiel.

In the afternoon, one plane of unknown type crashed burning in the Pommeranian Bay.

The convoys were carried through as planned. The towing convoy RITTER (Seidlitz) will presumably leave Kiel for Koenigsberg at 1200 on 30 March. At 0200 15 fast enemy intruder planes attacked Kiel. Eleven bombs were dropped, thereof six in the area of the town.

According to increasing ice conditions in the Gulf of Finland, the patrol forces of the Narva Bay were withdrawn to the West up to the border of the icefield. The enemy air raids on boats of the Narva-patrol were continued. There appeared formations up to the strength of 20 planes. On 28 March three attacking planes were shot down. On 29 March three air torpedo planes of type Boston operated under cover of eight fighters.

Netlaying was continued.

The destroyers Z 28, 35 and 39 executed exercises in the area west of "Channel 96."

The minesweeper M "7" supported by the patrol boat 303 was transferred from Tallinn to Turku by the ice-breaker ELSVOGEL.

The Naval Command East urgently applies for exchanging the 17th Patrolboat Flotilla for a flotilla of minesweepers well equipped with anti-aircraft artillery because the boats of the 17th Patrolboat Flotilla are not suiting, owing to their insufficient anti-aircraft weapons for defending air raids on our own patrol forces in the Gulf of Finland.

Both the minesweeping Flotillas belonging to the Commander Minesweepers East are at present in dockyard repair. Six boats of the 3rd Minesweeping Flotilla will be ready in April and two boats in May. The 25th Minesweeping Flotilla began routine dockyard repair only in March. The possibility in withdrawing minesweepers from other theaters only would be possible in putting up with essential set-backs. Therefore, the Naval Staff decides negative. The Commander Minesweepers East has to do it with the

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forces now available until the routine dockyard repair of the 3rd Minesweeping Flotilla has finished. Copy of the draught 1 Skl I op 9338/44 Gkdos in War Diary Part C Volume III.

V. Submarine Warfare:

1. Enemy Situation:

Following Radio Monitoring, new direction finding proceedings are appearing in the North and South Atlantic and some times in the Indian Ocean too since 1 February 44. Coding is changing approximately all 14 days. Thereby it became possible to have a look at the enemy direction finding organization as to the method of operation. Up to now the following direction finding stations appeared: the Azores, Gibraltar, Freetown, St. Helena, Ascension, Simonstown and nine stations in North-Brazil and in the area of the Caribbean Sea among others Pernambuco operating as control station. The times of taking the bearings are revealing that in most of the cases these were bearings of our own boats. It is remarkable that in many cases the same object was detected by all the stations mentioned above and situated in the North and South Atlantic.

Colombo repeated the SS-report of an unknown Allied steamer, which sighted submarine at 0250 in LD 41. It is not a German boat.

2. Own Situation:

At 1256 the submarine U "311" sighted a tanker proceeding with high speed on 220° in AL 9343.

The submarines U "541," U "92" and U "962" were assigned to new operational areas in the North Atlantic.

Operations are planned with the submarines U "155," "505" and "190" in the Freetown area.

The submarine U "488" supplied U "123" but however did not meet the U "801" and U "1059."

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

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During the day, 130 enemy missions with fighter cover and dropping of approximately 80 high explosives were reported in Belgium-Northern France in the area of Watten. Isolated penetrations without attacks occurred in Western France. During the night of 29 March, the raid of about 100 planes was reported on the railway station and a wagon-factory in the area of Ostende - Reims - Fécamp. At the railway station of Vaires seven to eight locomotives were damaged and one troop transport of the SS-tank division consisting of 300 - 400 wagons with lorries and troops was hit. One hundred and eleven lorries were destroyed and 100 men were killed in action.

Reich Territory:

During the day, in the afternoon hours a raid of several 100 bombers which penetrated under fighter cover was carried out on Brunswick from 6 - 7000 meters of altitude. One part of the bombs fell into free country. The attack was said to have been of medium size. Further, a number of airfields in Western Germany were attacked where damage was inflicted on planes, hangars and barracks.

During the night of 29 March, 30 enemy penetrations with bombing in the Rhenian-Westfalian industrial area were reported which hit various places without inflicting important damage. Further 30 planes dropped bombs in the area of Kiel-Luebeck. In Kiel, buildings were damaged.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 28 March the enemy reconnaissance activity in the Aegean and over Crete was unimportant.

In Central and Northern Italy, railway stations and bridges near Verona, Mestre and other railroad installations near Orvieto were attacked by strong groups. In the area of Ancona, one of our fighting vessels was attacked by three fighters.

Five enemy fighters were shot down by German fighters, and seven enemy fighters were shot down by Italian fighters. Three German and two Italian fighters were lost.

In the front area and south of Rome, 520 enemy planes were employed which attacked our own positions and supply routes.

During the night of 28 March, intruder missions were reported from the area of Venice - Padua - Milano - Bologna - Forli. Bombs were dropped on the main station of Milano. Thirty-eight planes of JU "88" - type attacked Vis in this night.

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During the night of 29 March, 46 of our own bombers were sent out to attack the convoy in the area of Algiers. Because the convoy was not found, single proceeding ships were attacked. Hits were obtained on two freighters of medium-sized tonnage. Five of our own planes were lost. On 29 March some of our own planes carried through reconnaissance flights.

Eastern Area:

On 28 March 1630 own and 1140 enemy missions were executed on the Eastern Front, five of our own and 16 enemy planes were lost.

At 0810 one BV "138" was shot down north of Bremanger.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1223 two submarines were sighted 14 miles south-west of Toulon.

At 1930 on 27 March, one CAIRO-class cruiser, one auxiliary cruiser, one LST and in the dock one cruiser of the TROMP-class, further 13 destroyers, 15 corvettes, twelve Agathe-boats,* 18 tugs, one French cable-ship and three oil lighters, besides three transports, 43 freighters, 13 tankers and in the dock two more transports were lying in Gibraltar.

According to reports from Center, two special freighters of 8 - 10,000 BRT with heavy lift derricks and deckload passed by at 1415 on 28 March with three escort vessels heading to the Atlantic.

Own Situation:

Five vessels with altogether 1000 BRT were escorted off the French South coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

Photographic reconnaissance of Anzio and Nettuno in the morning revealed no important amount of shipping. Compared with

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15 March, only slight decreasing of small vessels and landing-craft was recognized.

Between Anzio and Ponza, same destroyers and PT-boats were sailing on various courses.

According to report of the Intelligence Division from Cyprus [Cyprus?], all Greek submarines and war vessels are to be concentrated at Malta for European operation. Beirut now only is serving as rest naval base.

Own Situation:

Up to now, only eleven men of four overdue naval landing craft were rescued on a raft north of Piombino. According to their statements, three naval landing craft were certainly sunk by PT-boats. These statements were confirmed by detonations which were observed at midnight of 27 March north of Piombino.

According to an older account, the sinking was certainly done by destroyers or torpedo boats but not by PT-boats.

The loss of all four naval landing craft is to be counted on. Rescue checking for survivors was started at the place of accident but did not bring up any result up to now.

Owing to a serious air raid on Mestre-Venice, one newly-constructed corvette was totally lost.

Convoy and patrol duties were executed as planned.

The torpedo boat TA "20" and PT-boats MAS "41" and "75" carried out the minelaying task "BRUECKE" east of St. Giorgio as planned. On their way back, the TA "20" was attacked by enemy fighters without result.

Dating with 14 March, the German Naval Command Italy submitted the minelaying order for the minefield tasks "Schwalbe" and "Falke" with, if possible, three torpedo boats each as well "Huetten" and "Nest" with five - six motor minesweepers each. The minefield "Falke" is lying in the approaching area of the enemy transport tonnage on the southern outlet of Ajaccio Gulf.

The task "Huetten" is lying in the area off the Gulf of Porto Vecchio, being the starting point for enemy operations against the Italian West coast. The task "Schwalbe" is lying in the area off Kalvi, being the starting point for landing projects in direction to the French coast.

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The operation "Nest" is to be executed in the eastern outlet of Bonifacio Straits. But according to report of 25 March, German Naval Command Italy renounced the execution of this operation, and because of the short nights and the aggravated enemy situation and the lack of fighter cover, the responsibility of this execution cannot be borne; besides these facts, the war readiness of the 11th motor minesweeper Flotilla is insufficient.

3. Area of the Naval Group South

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance at 1830, there were three freighters lying stopped 10 miles north-west of Brindisi and two K-boats heading North-west, approximately 20 miles south-east of Bari six freighters of 4000 BRT each two ships of 2000 BRT heading North-west, off Lola di Bari three corvettes and one shallow draught boat on north-westerly course.

At about 2300 the Naval signal station Ostro (near Cattaro) reported several vessels in southern direction on northern course in distance of 15 miles and searchlight movements.

At 2322 the reported vessels went off to the south-west. Two small war vessels, 50 large and medium-sized coastal motor drifters thereof five damaged respectively sunken, five motor boats, 39 sailing boats were sighted in the harbor of Vis.

Own Situation:

On 22 March one Inf.-boat was annihilated east of Jelsa (Northern coast of Hvar) by fighter bombers. Nothing is known about the compliments. On 27 March another Inf.-boat was sunk by plane off Brac. Two more Inf.-boats were damaged off Poolje.

During the night of 29 March, more landing of supplies is planned at Hvar. The situation on the island is nearly unchanged.

The Group South applied for speedy bringing up of four 10.5 cm batteries and two medium-sized batteries of 20 km range in event of bottleneck for 9 cm or 13.5 cm batteries with all equipment as well as light anti aircraft platoons for the protection of Vis after capture. Personnel are not available.

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b. Aegean:

Enemy Situation:

According to agent reports of the Security Service, the following directive of the General Staff of the Middle East was transmitted by Radio via Smyrna to Athens on the end of February 1944.

"1. As quick as possible, independent bases must be established at the Aegean isles, the Cyclades and at the seven isles consisting of one chief officer, one radio operator and approximately ten men.

These bases will be subordinated to us and will make direct contact with us.

2. Each base has to keep one or two Kaiks* at its disposal, the staying of which has to be confirmed if ever possible. The Kaiks* must remain at their bases and will only make small journeys in emergency base for camouflage.

3. These bases have to be erected on the following isles: Lemnos, Leokas, Euboea, Andros, Tinos, Zea, (Tsia, Kithnos, Syros, Mykenos, Paros, Nacon, Naxos, Kybhera, Mylos, Creta, Kaphallania and others, if need be as per further directions of us.

4. The task of these bases will be:

A. To pick up the crew-members of those Allied planes which bombed the Balkan-States and which were forced to land on the isles or the sea owing to break-down.

B. To check up all possible information of movements of German Forces etc. For this task determined regulations will be issued to the chiefs of these bases as soon as they will be established. Presumable further supplementary orders will be issued.

5. At any rate and with all sacrifices the whole program has to be accomplished up until 15th April because from this time on heavy bombing of the Balkan States will be started."

According to supplementary reports, these bases are to serve not only for rescuing of planes being forced to land in emergency but also in event of Turkey's participation of war and will be used for the invasion to Thrazia, Bulgaria on the one and of Aibania on the other side.

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The Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff particularly directed the attention of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South West to the necessity of thoroughly checking of this report.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On the morning of 28 March, two landing craft with 29 Russian soldiers drifted ashore 26 miles north-east of Ak Mechet. According to statements of prisoners, still more boats are at sea.

According to reports of the Intelligence Division, a landing and an embarkation manoeuvre of the Black Sea Fleet are to be carried out in the beginning of April in the area of Novorossisk - Tuapse and Adler-Poti. In these manoeuvres at Poti-Batum operations with modern landing craft and heavy Sunderland-seaplanes are planned.

Own Situation:

At 2125 Sofia was raided with high explosives and incendiary bombs. Serious damage was inflicted. A Bulgarian ammunition depot blew up. Slight damage only was inflicted at our own naval headquarters.

Owing to the increased aerial danger of Odessa by the advancing enemy front, the Admiral Black Sea requested the Group South for reinforcing of the outflanking defense positions of this town by allocating alarm anti aircraft batteries.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance

As the Government remained in minority with one vote, in subordinate matters Churchill asked for a vote of confidence which is expected to be accepted with large majority.

Otherwise, no particular reports were submitted.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy

I. At their torpedo operation in proceeding to their operational area during the night of 29 March, the 8th PT-boat Flotilla made pick-up ten USA- airmen by two boats and then detached both the boats so that the remaining operational task only was executed with a group of four boats of the 8th PT-boat Flotilla, according to the brief report of the Commander PT-boats.

Further investigation on this strange mode of acting was ordered by the Commander in Chief, Navy. Thereupon the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff called the deputy of the Commander PT-boats who was on leave, by phone, who approved the decision of the Commander 8th PT-boat Flotilla. To him the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff declared that the Commander in Chief, Navy did not agree with this precaution because it was weakening the power of the attack.

Later on, the Commander PT-boats reported by telegram that the decision of detaching this subdivision of boats was made because of compass disturbances on the boats being in question. The Commander PT-boats on his part also approved the decision of the Flotilla Commander unconnected with the matter of compass disturbances referring to the possibility that the enemy would have rescued the prisoners and reports that no operative set backs did turn out because of suspending the operation later on by other reasons.

But at the given conditions picking up the prisoners before the attack was wrong.

II. Army Situation:

Personnel changes are to be expected in the command of the Army Groups. Presumably the Generals Model and Schoerer will be appointed to new commands. Put no details are known up to now.

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The General Staff of the Army considers the acute danger of the Odessa troops to be cut off as imminent. Enemy large scale attacks are to be expected from North and East in the Crimea.

Generally, the withdrawal of the 6th and 8th Armies is going on as planned, partially with serious fighting. On the Pruth River the enemy is speedily closing up.

Cernauti has been captured. Stanislavov is defended by troops of furloughers which were quickly scraped together. Our own operations in the area of Brest-Litovsk gained terrain. Relieving troops approached Kovel up to six km.

Heavy enemy attacks were repulsed in the Narva-sector.

At the Italian Southern Front, enemy pressure decreased essentially in the area of Cassino.

III. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff is reporting on the Romanian demand concerning the evacuation of Galati and the Danube ports situated east of it. Concerning that, the Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that the High Command Armed Forces/Operations Staff, Navy was requested to stop this precaution if possible via the German General in Romania.

IV. Oral report of the Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division Naval Staff:

a. Up to the morning of 29 March, the Army Group F asked for statements concerning "Freischuetz."*

1. If the Navy is being ready and when,
2. Which vessels would be employed referring to the known request of the Army Head Quarters 17 and the Army Group F.
3. Can the continuous supply for the Army approximately consisting of 1500 men be safeguarded, referring to the doubts concerning the losses of ships.

Under assumption that the German Air Force will protect the over-sea transportation and the execution of the operation in concentrated manner, the Admiral Adriatic answered the question in a

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positive sense. Copy of relevant telegram as per 1/Skl 987/44 Gkdos Chefs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

The Group South sent its own thorough assessment on the possibility of execution of this operation "Freischuetz" to the Army Group F with copy to the Operations Division, Naval Staff. In directing the attention to the changes of the situation, the Group is stating:

"a. Only 13 combined operation-boats and four assault boats are available as transporting vessels. Owing to losses, the Navy only can dispose of two Siebelt-Ferries and nine Inf.-boats of 100 respectively 30 men capacity. In addition to that, if need be four fighting-Siebelt-Ferries which preferably are to be employed as escorting vessels.

b. Therefore, transport capacity is insufficient at present. Reinforcement by 20 coastal motor sailing ships is to be expected up to 15 April. If then the number of vessels will be great enough for crossing all the troops with the first wave remains questionable. Here, it is unknown if the Combined Operations battalion will be able to concentrate further landing craft. The crossing in several waves during the night following each other is considered to be nearly not possible to be carried out.

c. On behalf of the Navy must be added the landing company of the Admiral Adriatic with 120 men on their own small assault boats.

d. Escort-vessels today:
one torpedo boat
four fighting Siebelt-Ferries
three PT-boats

From 15 April:
one new and three old torpedoboats,
probably one submarine chaser,
four PT-boats
six motor minesweepers,
four combat ferries.

Thus being sufficient for the planned operations supposing the support of the German Air Force in required sense.

Comprising everything, the Group is of the opinion that the insufficiencies of materiel f.e. the insufficient capacity of tonnage dare not prevent the operation. This one is necessary and urgent. Therefore, the shortage of materiel has to be overcome,

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f.e. in bringing up combined operations boats. Therefore, decision is arrived at the Army and the German Air Force.

Continuous supply of the isle will be possible after occupying, though with losses. But this is seriously depending on the aerial situation, that is to say relevant aerial cover has to be put at disposal for the transfer of supply transports every time.

The Commander in Chief, Navy fully agreed with this assessment.

The Armed Forces Operations Staff, Navy will be informed of this report by the Operations Division, Naval Staff with the following appendix:

1. In principle the demand of the Naval Staff for capturing Lissa will be maintained, but the assumption for execution of this operation and the following continuous supply of the occupation forces of this isle will be the relevant support by the German Air Force.

2. Whether the tonnage and the escort forces expected by the Group South for the 15 April which are necessary for these operations will really be available is at first depending on the aerial situation in the whole Adriatic (coastal channels, bases and dockyards).

Copy of relevant Radiogram as per 1/Skl I op 1001/44 Gkdos Chfs. in War Diary Part C Volume XIV.

b. Lecture of reflections of the Naval Staff concerning the occupation of the Aland-Islands relevant record in War Diary 29 March.

The Commander in Chief, Navy gave his consent.

W. Oral report of the Chief of the Underwater Obstacles Branch/
Naval Ordnance Division on mine failures.

1. Numerous unidentified detonations were observed in the trial barrages planted in December 1943 off Le Havre and equipped with AA₁*-firing devices. After having discovered unimportant leakages, several new barrages were laid out in meantime. Further self-detonations were not observed up to now. The improved firing device AA₂* has been released.

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2. The EMF-barrage* has been tested in the Skagerrak even in heavy weather. In the last time, complaints arrived from the western Mediterranean. Thereupon new trials were arranged by the Minelaying Trials Command in especially unfavorable waters at the Gulf of Biscay, thus revealing that the mine was not satisfactory. Therefore, the use of this mine previously was prohibited at the Atlantic coast and Norway.

3. In the DM - device [translator's note: pressure magnetic fuse], the pressure box proved to be not tightened enough, so that durability was too short. The defect will be removed.

4. The break-down of the Pertrix firm in Berlin, due to air damage caused important set-backs in delivering ignition batteries. Previously from April the break-down will be finished.

Conclusively the Chief of the Underwater Obstacles Branch/Naval Ordnance Division reports that according to the situation of possibilities all is done and still is going on for avoiding these defects in personnel and materiel sense.

The Quartermaster General will pay his attention for increasing the supply of the mining research as soon as possibility is appearing for that.

Special Items:

I. From the Information on the Situation by the Armed Forces Operations Staff, Navy:

1. For a new time the Fuehrer asked for assurance by the Navy that the forces projected for the Peipus-Flotilla will be at their places in the moment the ice is melting.

2. Concerning the situation in Italy, the Armed Forces Operations Staff has the opinion that no large scale attack would be planned at the main front by the enemy but on the other hand a serious attack would be expected from the beach-head, presumably coordinated with landing operations on other places. In this case, our own military situation will highly be intensified because no reinforcements of troops are possible to be sent to Italy. The railroad situation in Italy is meeting increasing difficulties. At improving weather conditions and shorter nights, aggravation of the situation will be expected.

3. The attitude of the Hungarian divisions at the Eastern Front in event of enemy pressure is arising serious doubts on

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their general ability of standing fire. Therefore strong support by German forces will be required.

4. The Fuehrer refused to suspend the general direction, saying that no troop transports dared to be executed aboard of steamers on which the cargo is consisting of high explosive materiel.

5. The Italian Government approached the Pope with the request to employ papal ships with the supply of the Roman population. For that purpose the Vatican previously will request the promise of a neutralized port in the Italian area. In regard to our own supply situation, the Commanding General Armed Forces South West thinks the execution of this precaution to be desirable. The High Command, Army also principally gave its consent but raised doubts concerning the consent of the enemy.

6. The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping submits a report on the situation in sea-shipping from December 1943.

II. In regard to the question concerning the effects of the capture of Nicolaev and the thinning up operation of Odessa which was put up by the Naval Staff, the Group South gave its assessment as follows:

1. "The Capture of Nicolaev reduced the repair capacity in the Black Sea for 50%.

2. The capacity of Odessa however was increased by transfer from Nicolaev and by handing over of the Romanian dockyards situated there, so that generally the requirements of repairs was fulfilled.

3. At this time the Naval Fitting-Out Depot of Nicolaev is being transferred into the area of Galati-Braila and the capacity of Naval outfitting and repair works Constanța is being increased by the transfer of Nicolaev dockyard.

4. Increasing of the Black Sea's capacity is planned by handing over the Romanian repair shops of Constanța to the Commissioner for the South-Eastern Countries.

5. As transfer and installation of new work shops is going on at present, the capacity is below that one which is to be expected later on. From here the amount of time for that cannot be estimated.

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6. As the Dockyard Control Staff of the Admiral Black Sea already has evacuated respectively has prepared for evacuation from Odessa all the working objects which are not expected to be finished up on 2 April, which at this time is delayed owing to bad weather conditions and lack of tugs, there will be counted on that these ones will be accomplished at the new places with minor delay only.

7. It must be counted on that, after starting time of these new installations, the demands of repair work only can be fulfilled in concentrating all powers. Inquiry concerning this [may be made] to the Commissioner for South Eastern Countries who is responsible for all the repair work going on.

III. On inquiry of the Operations Branch, Naval Staff the Group West reports that immediately after the first attack against the submarine-escort off the Atlantic Coast, the Commanding Admiral, Defenses West and the Commander Submarines, West have investigated the necessity of conversion of the escort service relevant to the new situation. In accordance with the Group West, the new type submarine escort already has been started. Following to that, open water escorts only would be arranged for damaged incoming submarines. For all other submarines, escorts are restricted up to the inner meeting points and as far as possible have been reinforced. Reception at the meeting point will be made at dawn. Proceeding between inner and outward meeting points always is to be made emerged in the night, deep diving trial will be made during the day in the vicinity of the outward meeting point. The naval forces getting free by abolishing the open water escorts will be employed in strengthening of the inner escorts and in increased sweeping of the outer channels. Owing to possible single ground mines not being cut or deep standing ATE-mines,* the submarines are not to dive too deep on the outer ways. Beyond that, the Commander Submarines West agreed with the X. Air Corps upon the close covering of inner escorts proceeding on day with one wave each. Regularly this would mean covering up to the harbor entrance. In case that several escorts are proceeding at the same time, the air cover will be organized conjointly for ports in the neighbourhood and in double for separated ports. At the present situation in the Air Force, continuous execution is not secured but is to be expected for most of the escorts. These measures are illustrating further withdrawal from the enemy pressure towards our own coast. The single proceeding of outgoing submarines will be prolonged for one day while no difficulties would arise for returning submarines. Increased mine danger caused by single proceeding was thought to be bearable. For the whole, these precautions are signifying increased

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operation with forces of the Commanding Admiral, Western Defenses. Participation of torpedo boats with the escorting of damaged submarines from the outer points is planned in case that vessels are lacking at the Commanding Admiral Defenses West. But owing to far too small channels within the lines of buoys, participation of torpedo boats at the inner escorts is impossible even where the anti aircraft protection of submarines by forces of the Commanding Admiral Defenses West already is difficult.

The Naval Staff informs the Armed Forces High Command/Operations Staff, Navy of the supposition that the British are using a new system in attacking submarine escorts by Mosquito squadrons on the inner channels of the Gulf of Biscay, thus destroying boats which are compelled to stick to the channel and which are unable to dive.

Convoy strengthening has been started. The Air Forces Operations Staff was informed on the new situation and advised that only by increased fighter operations effective remedy could be reached.

IV. During his last visit at the Fuehrer's Headquarters, the Chief of Staff of Naval Staff referred the Chief of General Staff, Air Force to the necessity of increasing the forces of the 5th Air Force and received adequate promise. [Translator's note: the two following lines are crossed out, then the following is in handwriting: see in records of proceedings.] Unfortunately nothing has happened up to now. In the contrary, the Commander in Chief, Air Force/Operations Staff, Operations Branch Naval Liaison is communicating by Telegram that strengthening of the submarine chasing forces by transfer of the wing I/196 from the Skagerrak to South-Western Norway will be ordered corresponding to the request of the Operations Division, Naval Staff from 30 March, but that previously no transfer of bomber squadrons is planned for fighting the QP-convoys particularly because no convoy shipping has been observed since long.

Immediately after reception of the Telegram, the report is coming in that at 1300 PQ has been detected by air reconnaissance in AE 3993.

Furthermore the Commander in Chief, Air/Operations Staff is notifying that reinforcements will be executed in the Kandalaksha sector by two dive-bomber and one fighter group transferred from the area of the eastern Front so that forces in

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the area of Petsamo remain available for escorting the convoy shipping.

Concerning the Adriatic, the Commander in Chief, Air/Operations Staff is notifying that no fighter forces will be available at the coast.

Purely one fighter group is staying in Nish and one squadron in Athens. In consideration of the defense situation in the Reich which is strained to the utmost, no transfer of fighter forces into the area of Adriatic will be expected. But it might be possible to set up fighter cover in restricted extent for particular operation e.f. for the Operation "Freischuetz."*

As to bomber squadrons, there is one available in the area of Vienna which attacked Lissa on 28 March. This squadron may support the operation "Freischuetz" effectively. On behalf of this operation, the Chief of the Air Force Operations Staff agrees with the opinion of the Group South and the Operations Division, Naval Staff. The operation has to be ordered by the Armed Forces High Command.

If the enemy air forces will not be fought by our own Air Force, the supply of the Armed Forces which is depending on this area will cease with all its consequences then revealing for warfare in Italy and especially in the Balkans.

V. The Operations Division, Naval Staff informs the Quartermaster Division that up to now all attempts trying to strengthen the anti aircraft protection of the Adriatic ports have failed because neither the German Air Force nor the Navy can detail forces into this area. Efforts for reaching reinforcements in fighter cover also remained unsuccessful because of the necessity of the Reich defense. Now the protection of ships is only depending on the power of their anti aircraft weapons. Therefore the Quartermaster Division was requested to instruct and inform the Operations Division, Naval Staff of the stand of anti aircraft weapons on the vessels operating in the Adriatic if there are still existing requests in this connexion which are not fulfilled and which conditions could accomplish them. At this time, this matter will be treated as professed main task.

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VI. In answering the application of the Group South concerning the transfer of batteries to Vis (see War Diary 29 March), the Quartermaster Division is deciding that no materiel and personnel can be detailed from home area. The Group South is referred to the draught of the Quartermaster Division from 15 March saying that eleven batteries are available, four of them are planned to be established at the East coast of Istria so that seven batteries will remain available for Vis. Distribution as to their calibres will be left to the Group South's own discretion. The personnel is to be taken from Naval Artillery Detachment which were newly brought up.

VII. With 22 January the Operations Division asked the Commanding Admiral Adriatic to give an assessment of the reliability and efficiency of the Croates in combat. The Naval Liaison Staff Croatia submitted an assessment of the situation and a report of work of the Naval Liaison Staff with 7 February for the time from beginning of December 1943 to the end of January 1944. As per 1 Skl 5023/44 Gkdos, the report is to be found in the documents of 1/Skl I c B 10 e. Generally, it describes a less pleasing picture but has, however, won no clear survey on the reliability of the Croates that could not be expected facing to the confused situation in this area.

The report arrives at the conclusion that previously the materiel construction of a Croatian Navy exceeding beyond the demands of our Adriatic Coast cannot be answered for, but that it would be necessary, however in the Navy's own interest to pull as many young replacement troops from this country as possible for Croatian return service to our efforts in Croatia and to hold as big a number of contingents at German instruction detachments in order to place them in our own defense front if need be. Previously these soldiers would show readiness to aid the war effort and efficient performances in every theater outside of Croatia.

This report was made known to the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff and to the Recruitment Division.

IX. After presentation of the wire controlled torpedo at the Torpedo Experimental Station on 28 March, the Commander in Chief, Navy ordered that for strengthening of the coastal defense in the area of the Group West, 35 batteries with 30 torpedoes each have to be established with acceleration. Adequate directive has

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been conveyed to the Torpedo Branch. The torpedo gets the code-name "Spinne." Further arrangements will be made by the Quartermaster Division, Naval War Staff. According to its desire, the Torpedo Branch will be participated in the planning of batteries in other Group areas.

X. The transfer of the first group of twelve naval landing craft from Genoa to the Adriatic is going on. Because at this time the German Naval Command Italy only is disposing of 65 naval landing craft and previously the number of new constructions for the German Naval Command will remain very small, the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff ordered that no transfer will be executed until July 1944. Besides this, it is ordered that six of the naval landing craft being in transfer at first are to remain for the disposal of the German Naval Command Italy for use at the Italian Eastern Coast.

Situation 30 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In answering adequate request, the Naval Attaché Tokyo is reporting on 28 March that in principle the Japanese Navy is disposed to support the oil supply of our own combat boats in the east of Madagascar by Japanese submarines. The Japanese Navy is proposing to supply the battle boats which are coming from Germany only so far that they would reach Penang with short operational time in the Bay of Bengal and then after having been fitted out start for longer-timed operations from there and return to Penang. After completed outfitting, the way home is to be carried through as transport-boat which is allowed to operate freely.

The Naval Staff is answering that the supply by two Japanese submarines would be very desirable. Preparations are to be made. Supply terms for May will be transmitted.

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II. Situation West Area:

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1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group nine, at the 19th Group 45 planes were detected up to 14° West. In AM two British vessels were detected.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

Mines were swept: two off Brest, five off Belle Ile, one off La Pallice. The mine-exploding vessel "1" was seriously damaged by mine off Brest and was towed in. Torpedo boat T "29," KONDOR, and JAGUAR as well as T "27," GREIF and MOEVE entered Brest as planned. The convoy of the steamer DERINDJE was executed to Brest as planned. Proceeding to La Pallice had been started in the evening.

Destroyer ZH "1" transferred from Le Verdon to Pauillac.

Two submarines were escorted incoming.

Channel Area:

Two mines were swept in the area of Dunkerque. The 2nd, 4th and 8th PT-boat Flotillas have broken off their operation during the night of 29 March, because only an uncertain radio-intercepted report was existing on the southbound convoy and it was assumed that on 28 March no SF convoy left the Firth of Forth. The rescue of American airmen is already reported.

Brief report of the Commander PT-boats see Radiogram 0605.

During the night of 30 March, torpedo operations of the 5th and 9th PT-boat Flotillas in the Hoofden against southbound convoy is planned.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

North Sea:

Escort minesweeping and Patrol duties were executed under strong efforts of the forces of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses North.

45,000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Sea and Zealand Waters.

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One mine was swept off Terschelling six miles south of Heligoland. Since 18 March 70 mines were swept off the river mouths of the Heligoland Bight.

Owing to suspected minelaying, the traffic channel Elbe-Jade-Weser was closed.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 18th Group 18 planes were detected in mission. At 0950 our own air reconnaissance detected two steamers and one destroyer heading 45° in AE 3665 and at 1300 sighted 30 ships steering 25° in AE 3993. At 1500 a convoy consisting of 30 merchantmen, more ships of unknown type, three cruisers and six destroyers were reported in AO 3939. At 1615 the composition of the PQ-convoy in AE 3634 was detected with 40 merchantmen and 22 escort-vessels (cruisers and destroyers), formation in four lines ahead. By that the expected PQ-convoy has been detected.

According to radio monitoring, attack reports of planes of the 18th Group on our own convoys were detected at 1850 and shortly before midnight of 30 March. Furthermore, one British vessel was located in the eastern exit of the Pentland Firth.

2. Own Situation:

Additionally on 28 March was reported that at 2325 on 25 March between Vardoe and Vadsoe a lorry column of the German Air Force was surprisingly attacked by a Russian command of 50 - 70 soldiers. Six men are missing, one is killed in action. Presumably the evacuation of the Russians has been made by PT-boats.

At 1845 the steamer MONTE ROSA belonging to the southbound convoy was unsuccessfully attacked with gunfire and torpedoes by 18 Beaufighter planes. Four attacking planes were shot down by escort vessels and one by the battery Haugesund.

Shortly after midnight, one of our own convoys again was attacked by torpedoplanes in the Fliestein channel without result.

The Admiral Northern Waters/Commander Submarines, Norway reports the groups "Thor," "Hammer" and "Blitz" consisting of twelve submarines to be in their attacking areas from AB 4948 to AB 8858. The submarine U "673" is set up in the approach road of the operational area for reconnaissance from the ice bank and submarine U "360" from the South. Another submarine is leaving

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Hammerfest and three more are leaving Narvik, so that a total of 18 boats are participating in attacking the PQ 31. The Commander Submarines, Norway is planning to lay out patrol lines immediately from AB 5795 to AB 8673. This line has been set up in such a manner that previously the attack on the convoy will happen during the night of 31 March in concentric form. Distance from boat to boat 10 miles. All arrangements concerning contacting, concentration and beacon signals as well as the use of flare facilities were discussed with the Air Commander. For the last time the convoy was reported by our own air reconnaissance at 0133 on 31 March in AF 1516. Wind was reported NE to North four to five, sight one to five miles with minor showers of snow.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Thirty-three boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances, 27 boats and seven minesweeping planes in the Baltic Sea were engaged in minesweeping. Eight mines were swept in the Kiel Bay and one mine in Samsoe-Belt. After having struck two mines, the steamer ERFURT (4201 BRT) sunk in the western exit of the Fehmarn Belt. The Channel from exit of Kiel Bay into the Fehmarn Belt was closed.

Escort duties executed without special events.

The destroyers Z "28," "35" and "39" executed night exercises west of Washorn.

The auxiliary cruiser HANS GEORG with four naval landing craft is transferring from Windau to Tallinn. The minelayer BRUMMER was detached from Tallinn to Pillau for fetching mines.

The night-fighter directing ships TOGO and NETTELBECK are reported to be in night operation off Tallinn.

The Narva Bay patrol was detained owing to drifting ice and mud ice. The armed fishing smacks and artillery ferry barges were withdrawn to Kaspervik.

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The enemy air activity against our own forces in the Gulf of Finland was very strong. Several times the attacks were carried through by groups up to 100 planes. Our own boats shot down three planes and sustained losses in personnel.

The harassing attack on Kiel during the night of 29 March is already reported.

From the area of the Army Group Narva, the Admiral Baltic Countries reported fierce fighting for annihilating the enemy West-sack occupation. Relieving attempts were repulsed.

On 28 March our own cutting off front south of Ostrow was repulsed one km. A strong enemy attack is expected south of Pskov.

Special Items:

1. The Commander in Chief, Air issued the directive that the 4th Air Force has to transfer six planes Ju 52 MS with crews and three minesweeping squadrons in the area of the Air Force Fleet to Kastrup south of Kobenhavn where they will be subordinated to the 5th Minesweeping squadron.

2. During Fleet exercises, the Commanding Admiral, Fleet and the Chief of the Training Unit, Fleet uttered to the Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff that the execution of dredging in the port of Libau are to be considered particularly urgent. Thereby it was mentioned that only minor quantities are necessary to be dredged in order to result that heavy cruiser SCHEER and PRINZ EUGEN would be able to touch Libau.

The Quartermaster Division was requested to arrange further proceedings with the note that greatest value would be laid on the fact to create the above mentioned possibility for the large cruisers.

3. By reason of the accentuation of minefield situation in the western Baltic Sea, the Naval Command East applied for allotment of three to four cleaning vessels of the Mining and Barrage School during four weeks. The Naval Staff requests the Mining and Barrage School for report which vessels could be detailed and which effects would occur by this kind of allocation.

V. Submarine Warfare:

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On 27 March submarine U "532" sunk the Australian steamer AGE (4734 BRT) in LY 5755 in the Indian Ocean.

In the operational area off North Minch, the submarine U "621" sunk one unidentified vessel with Zaunkoenig* and began to proceed home.

Submarine U "1224" (MARCO POLO II) with Japanese crew left Kiel.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

West Area:

During the day 100 enemy penetrations into the area Calais-Amiens with attacks on the airfield of Eindhoven were reported. Five planes flew into the area of Dieppe in Western France and four planes penetrated from the South.

During the night of 30 March, a number of airfields were attacked in Belgium-Northern France. In Western France, the penetration of 45 planes into the area of Le Havre, Lyon, Angers, Bayeux was reported, presumably in supplying agents.

Nine Me "410" planes completed harassing attacks on London without own losses. Twelve FW 190's attacked Eastbourn also without any losses.

Reich Territory:

During the night of 30 March, several 100 bombers raided Nuremberg in an attack which was called of medium-serious size. Thirty-four night fighters sent out from the 3rd Air Force shot down 13 enemy planes certainly and one probably. The defense results of the Air Force "Reich" are still not yet known.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 29 March the enemy reconnaissance activity over the Aegean and at the Albanian Coast was unimportant. Over Leros one Spitfire was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery. One anti-aircraft artillery emplacement at Corfu was attacked with gunfire by two Spitfires. Further attacks were made on the sea plane base of Cattaro and Ragusa.

One hundred Liberators with fighter escort coming from the area of Foggia attacked the railway station of Bolzano and several

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airfields in the vicinity. German and Italian fighters shot down one attacking plane each, anti-aircraft artillery three more.

Further attacks were executed on Turino and the railway station of Milano whereby three planes were shot down by Italian fighters and two of our own planes were lost. Besides this, airfields and railway installations and one radio set near Cecina and the harbor of Ancona were attacked by minor forces or isolated planes respectively in the northern Italian area.

Five hundred and fifty enemy planes operated in the Front Area and in the beachhead, two of them were shot down.

Own planes executed harassing flights in the beachhead.

On 29 March four of our own bombers damaged a sailing ship off Patras. Forty-three ground attack aircraft and fighters attacked ship targets off Anzio and obtained five presumable hits on freighters. Five of our planes were lost. One enemy fighter was shot down.

During the night of 29 March, twelve of our own bombers laid mines in the area off Anzio for a new time.

At 0805 on 30 March, our own air reconnaissance detected a west-bound convoy of 25 steamers NE of Bengasi.

Eastern Area:

On 29 March 1507 own and 1178 enemy missions were flown. Eight of our own planes were lost, 17 enemy planes were shot down.

The sighting of the PQ-convoy has already been reported.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 1000 one convoy of 59 freighters, 13 tankers, seven presumable LST's with eleven destroyers and one cruiser presumably US-convoy steering to the Mediterranean was reported in the Gibraltar Straits.

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At noon one CAIRO-class cruiser left Gibraltar eastbound.

Own Situation:

In the course of transfer to Italy, five vessels (1544 BRT) were escorted off the French South coast.

At 0920 one of our own submarines entering Toulon was fired on with a missing triple-spread salvo by an enemy submarine.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy

Enemy Situation:

On the afternoon of 29 March, no essential changes were stated in the area of Anzio. On the morning of 30 March, withdrawal of landing facilities was observed contrary to the day before. At 0530 our own air reconnaissance detected 25 merchantmen and three patrol boats heading West NNE of Alexandria. Sighting of the westbound convoy NNE of Bengasi is already reported. The German Naval Command Italy is assuming this to be supply for the Southern Front.

Own Situation:

The enemy raids on ports of the West coast were continued. On the afternoon of the 29 March, one barge, two naval landing craft, two barges and one small vessel were sunk in Livorno. On the afternoon of 15 March, the motor minesweepers R "161," RA "256" and two barges sank in Livorno. Damage in the shipyards is not yet stated. Owing to air raid, the repair yard on Portoferaiio was annihilated. In the Arno-mouth one barge was damaged and set aground. Minor damage on the piers was inflicted in Ancona.

During the night of 29 March, three motor minesweepers and the minelayer OLDENBURG accomplished the minefield task "Stachel-schwein" NE of Capraia and PT-boats MAS "41" and "75" executed the minelaying task east of Girogio as planned.

Minesweeping in our own barrages SE of Elba remained without result during the night of 28 March and were not continued during the night of 29 March owing to bad weather conditions. Escort and patrol duties too were detained owing to bad weather conditions.

During transfer the Italian PT-boat MAS "502" sunk SE of Piombino, owing to bad weather. Also between Venice and Ancona a towed convoy lost one pontoon owing to sea damage.

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From La Pallice the submarine U "466" executed transfer into the Mediterranean during time from 4 - 30 March. The boat is assuming net barrage in CG 9671 owing to a scraping sound at the hull of the boat. Immediately afterwards a fierce detonation took place owing to which two metres of the bow were wrenched off. As already reported, the boat was unsuccessfully attacked with triple-spread salvo in entering Toulon outside of the harbor barrage.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

The vessels which were sighted on the evening of 29 March in the area of Cattaro presumably were four or six gunboats.

Own Situation:

At Hvar our own troops reached Jelsa. The enemy in strength of 100 soldiers avoided to the West. [Translated by Op-292A: The enemy in strength of several hundred men conducted a tactical withdrawal to the west.]

On 29 March the mopping up of the Isle of Krk [also known as Veglia] has been executed by naval forces. One hundred and seven prisoners, among them 14 communist leaders and 20 partisans, were brought in. From Buccary the KIEBITZ and two infantry landing craft executed the operation "Thule" as planned and returned to Fiume.

The minesweeping operations carried through with two minesweeping planes revealed no result.

b. Aegean:

At 2030 on 28 March, two British commando squads in strength of eight or ten men accomplished a landing at Stampalia and carried off the port commander and one civil captain. The landing of a second squad was repulsed. In the northern exit of the Gulf of Patras, a suspicious sailing ship was brought to a stand with gunfire by two Arado-planes on 29 March and was then forced to enter Patras. A second sailing ship which did not stop at call was fought with bombs and gunfire. She made herself run aground off Oxia. Forces which were transferred to Oxia aboard of PT-boat S "601" revealed to be too weak and after having blasted the ship, returned to Patras.

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On 30 March both one enemy submarine was sighted off Cape Matapan and south of Cassandra-Huk.

From the convoy which left Chios on 26 March Mythelene bound, one coastal defense vessel and another vessel are overdue. On 26 March the coastal defense vessel GM "68" ran aground in Keriaka-Canal (Chalkidike) and was annihilated.

c. Black Sea:

At 1930 on 29 March one of our own convoys was unsuccessfully attacked with two missing torpedoes by enemy submarine west of Tendra. During the night of 27 March, one tug boat and one tanker barge stranded off AK Metchet. Off Mangalia two submarine chasers of the convoy tanker BAYREUTH stranded. The drifting tanker was towed into Varna by war transport KT "25." The ship "9" which ran aground south of Constanța was towed off and docked.

Submarine U "23" left Constanța, submarine U "9" entered Feodosiya.

Convoys were carried through as planned. Two thinning-up convoys entered Sulina coming from Odessa.

Ochakof and Pervomaisk are evacuated entirely. Naval and Army units were transferred to Odessa by naval landing craft. The 17 cm and 28 cm mortars, which could not be dismantled by the army owing to lack of tractors, were blasted. Enemy action by harassing fire shortly before transloading inflicted no effect.

During the night of 29 March, the first minelaying operation in the Dnieper-Liman was executed by mine-naval landing craft as planned. The second minelaying operation is planned during the night of 30 March.

No particular reports were submitted from the patrol line in Kerch-Straits.

Rather serious damage was inflicted on naval building by the day air raid on Sofiya. For a large part, the Quartermaster office of the Group South is not able for work. Wire communications were shut down owing to breakdown of all long distance communications. The Armed Forces communications net in town is destroyed. Naval teletype and telephone exchange are broken down. Minor losses of personnel.

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The Naval Liaison Staff Romania is reporting to the Army Group A with copy to the Group South, that the Romanian Minister of the Navy is urgently desiring to keep the steamer ALDA JULIA for only disposal of the Romanians in order to carry off ammunition from Odessa. Thereby the pretended evacuation of 1100 wounded will be impossible.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

In answering an inquiry put up some time ago, the Naval Attaché Tokyo is now conveying a message of the Japanese Admiralty Staff saying that, after careful Japanese checking, the enemy totally is employing 7.58 millions BRT of tonnage in South-West Pacific inclusively Hawaii, thereof 1.8 millions BRT of tanker space. 4.07 millions BRT are employed in troop supply.

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Items of Political Importance:

On 30 March the British Government got the asked vote of confidence with 425 to 23 votes.

In the House of Commons, Churchill declared that the Atlantic Charter and its principles would remain the dominating aim of Great Britain.

In regard to the Political situation in Finland, the Naval Attaché reported on 20 March that the Russians now had precised their former claim to that form, that the whole area of Petsamo will be asked without compensation and indemnification. The Finnish delegation is expected to return in the next days.

Conference on the Situation with the Commander in Chief, Navy:

I. The Chief of Staff of Naval Staff is reporting on exercises of the Trainings Unit Fleet which were impaired by bad weather, so that the planned aircraft and PT-boats operations had to be suspended. The training efficiency of these exercises was recognizable during these three days.

II. Army Situation:

With promotion to Field Marshal, the General Model assumed the command of the Army Group South, the General Schoerer assumed the command of the Army Group A. At first the Army Group North will be taken by General Lindemann. The Field Marshals v. Manstein and von Kleist have been relieved.

The withdrawing movements of the 6th and 8th Army are going on as planned. The 1st Panzer Army continues its efforts to break through in western direction. The last reserves (furloughers) were brought into battle in the area of Stanislawow. The situation is settled. Tarnopol and Kovel too are continuing the defense against heavy enemy pressure with good results. The heavy defense battle east of the Beresina is going on.

III. The Quartermaster General:

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Up to now, the Naval Staff always has asked fuel allocations from the Armed Forces High Command which seemed to be acceptable. The now planned demand of 30.000 m³'s for training purposes of the ships will certainly exceed the consumption so that stocks will be piled up which later on the Armed Forces High Command will discover. Therefore the Naval Staff is intending to restrict the demand to 8000 m³'s.

During his last visit to the Fuehrer's Headquarters, the Commander in Chief, Navy consciously avoided the report of the big fuel demand, thus postponing it to a later, psychologically more suitable moment.

The Admiral Luetjje is to report on the total fuel situation of the Navy.

Special Items:

I. The increasing number of enemy air raids is expecting a more frequent break-down of wire communications. Beyond that the annihilation of radio stations must be counted on. Therefore one may count on the demand of mobile radio transmitting stations by Headquarters. Besides this the need of having wire communication construction detachments at own disposal would increase.

Before demands concerning the disposal of such detachments could be raised here, the Chief of Naval Communications Division is requested to inform the Operations Division/Naval Staff on the possibilities available.

II. The Naval Group South informed the Naval Staff of the following radiogram which the Air Force Command South-East wired to the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff on behalf of the nonsufficient defense and patrol forces in the southeastern area:

"The lowest demand for aerial patrol forces and submarine chase on day and night amounts to one entire fighter group (type BF 109), one group of fighterbombers (type Me 410) two battle echelons (type He 111 or Ju 88) equipped with ship searching gear, for night operation. The Air Force Command emphasized the opinion that in all probability at the present situation the demand for supply of the islands cannot be fulfilled. But one must count on ever decreasing tonnage, and therefore the supply of the islands

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will become more and more the task of aerial transportation. Therefore, all aerial transportation groups available have to be held in this area."

At desire of the Group South, the Naval Staff supports the apply of the Air Force Command South East with reference to numerous questions already put up in these matters by adequate radiograms to the Commander in Chief, Air/Operations Staff, Operations Branch Naval Liaison.

III. The Group West made the application to employ the anti-aircraft weapons of the blockade runners in the coastal defense. The Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff principally agrees with the proposal of the Group West to employ the anti-aircraft weapons of the blockade runners which at this time are remaining in the West Area. Regarding the place of employment of these weapons, the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff was requested to investigate if the apply of the Group West for reinforcing the section south of the Gironde was to be granted or if the weapons should be more necessary at other places (Adriatic respectively Aegean).

Draught 1/Skl I g 10004/44 Gkdos in War Diary Part C Book X.

IV. Cancelling former directives, the Armed Forces High Command/Quartermaster Division ordered on 29 March:

"1. Transfer of units of the fighting troops to Hungary do require no particular permit of the Armed Forces High Command.

2. Furthermore, the transfer of supply troops and supply installations of the Army Groups and Air Forces of the Eastern Front do require no particular approval.

3. Transfer of all the other military offices and troops to Hungary is depending on preliminary approval of the Commanding General, Armed Forces South-East or on the offices designated by himself."

V. Report of the journey of the Lieutenant (s.gr.) Jaeger (Fleet Operations Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff) in duty as Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Operations Staff Margarethe from 25 - 28 March 1944 is to be found as per 30 March 1944 in War Diary Part C Book XIV a.

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Situation 31 March 1944

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Naval Intelligence Division is reporting on training of US landing forces at the American East Coast. Copy of the report as per 1/Skl 12038/44 Geheim in War Diary Part C Book XVII.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

At the 15th Group eight, at the 19th Group were 59 planes, at the Azores Squadrons was one plane detected. Two British vessels were located in the rendezvous area. Planes of the 19th Group reported on own destroyers north-west of the Gironde and ten small merchantmen southwest of St. Nazaire, presumably fishermen.

At 0700 our own air reconnaissance sighted one heavy cruiser in BF 1278 and more unknown ships on westerly course.

2. Own Situation:

Area of the Atlantic Coast:

The 5th Torpedoboat Flotilla transferred from Brest to La Pallice. The destroyer Z "23" sailed from Le Verdon to Pauillac.

Three incoming submarines were escorted. One mine each was swept in the area of the Gironde and in the Quiberon-Bight, two mines were swept in the area of St. Jean de Luz.

Channel Area:

During the night of 30 March, the 15th Patrolboat Flotilla was engaged with four or six enemy PT-boats and gunboats northwest of Somme mouth. Four torpedoes had been avoided. After sudden defense fire, the enemy boats went off developing artificial smoke screen. Two of them were observed to be in fire. Brief report see Radiogram 0930.

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Two mines were swept in the area of Dunkerque. (wing to engine-trouble, two boats of the 8th PT-boat Flotilla have been detached untimely during the operation of the 2nd, 4th and 8th PT-boat Flotillas. Off Ymuiden the two boats were engaged between enemy PT-boats and one of our own convoy, they scored hits without losses. At 2300 the advancing flotilla was detected by the enemy air reconnaissance whereupon then relevant concentrations of motor gunboats were to be seen in the Radio picture and the convoy was turned off from the outer channel to the inner one. All the flotillas untimely met motor gun-boats. Shortly after midnight return order was issued. Then the 2nd and 8th PT-boat Flotillas were launched on motor torpedo boats which attacked one of our own convoys off Ymuiden. Brief report see Radiogram 0715.

The Group West reports its plan to lay ground-mine barrages equipped with new firing units in the East Channel during the new moon period in April, and repeatedly calls for confirmation that mines with AA₁* and AA₂* firing units are released and useful. Besides, the Group is requesting for allocation of 900 mines type EMC* equipped with chain and snagline and mine fitting tally.

Concerning the AA₁* - firing units, the Naval Staff is certainly counting on diminution of disadvantages. Recall of these mines will be required in early time in order to send skilled personnel from home staff officials for clearing these mines. Observing safety distance is particularly important as the technically complicated firing unit which is favouring single self-detonation.

Furthermore, the Naval Staff is of the opinion that mines which are not sweepable for ourselves should not be laid in defense barrages in the vicinity of our own channels. These mines would be more suitable for offensive operation. As the duration of serviceability of the AA₁-barrage cannot be estimated exactly, minefield operation by the German Air Force is only left in case completion of the barrage would be required. For that, the marking by the Navy of the limit beyond which no mines dare be laid towards our shore, would in no case be required before Air Force operation. Finally, Group West is requested for information on why the coastal mines type A-production plant in Le Havre is not beginning until 30 April and support of the High Command, Navy is offered for precipitation of the project.

In addition to that, the Group West is reporting that the offensive operations with mines equipped with new firing units only comes in question by strongest efforts, that is to say, conjointly with the German Air Force. As this is not counted on pending

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further notice, the problem of offensive operation at this time is of no value. At this time, defensive tasks are in priority. The Group considers the defensive operation of AA₁* - firing units right because the enemy already is sweeping moored mines near our own coast which are equipped with snag lines and anti-sweeping device. The completion of the barrages by the Air Force is deemed to be unfeasible by the Group, because the 3rd Air Force cannot be detailed for longer time owing to bombing operation which were ordered by the highest officials and because the areas suitable for this minelaying with AA₁* - firing units concerning the depth are so narrow limited off our own coast that even in operating with luminous limitation no exact location could be granted. Therefore, the Group is certainly expecting that in reinforcing the own L-barrages from the air, our own channels would be blocked. The Group is finding a restricted possibility to reinforce the L-barrage in direction to our own coast as soon as mines would be available and will submit adequate plan in nearest time. Beyond that, the Group is planning L-barrages with AA-firing unit off the Flandres coast.

The coastal mine type A production in Le Havre only begins on 30 April because the laying of trial barrage off Dieppe is to be waited for accomplishments and because the possibilities of laying at sea in the area of Cherbourg - Ostende are extraordinarily limited owing to coastal and ground damage and the neighbourhood of channels. Therefore the production at Dieppe is appearing fully sufficient, all the more since the speed of laying in the English Channel can not be speeded up because it is depending on dark nights.

The Naval Staff calls the Group West's attention to the fact that the anti-sweeping device of the AT-mines [translator's note: moored mines] is not sufficient and that therefore barrages in Channel area would be an important landing obstacle only by sufficient use of EMR/K.*

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

North Sea:

Owing to bad weather conditions, convoy-minesweeping and escort duties were restricted during the night of 31 March.

At 2235 on 30 March, a large number of enemy planes penetrated

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in broad formation with eastern course into the Heligoland Bight which advanced up to the coast of Schleswig-Holstein. These were minelaying planes. The mine infected area: off the North and East Frisian Isles, the area around Heligoland and the Weser and Elbe River mouths. Our own fighters took off in the area of Wesermuende, Kiel and Bremen. Anti-aircraft firing was reported from Emden, Cuxhaven, Morderney, Heligoland and Wangeroog.

At 2348 the battery 2/180 Flushing North was attacked with gunfire by enemy planes.

On 31 March two harbor defense boats were engaged with six or eight enemy PT-boats from 0000 to 0100 off Ymuiden. No effect was observed at the enemy. No damage and losses occurred at the own boats.

Owing to radio Monitoring, several enemy PT-boats were then towed off in damaged condition.

Fifteen mines were swept in the Heligoland Bight.

At 2013 our own air reconnaissance sighted four enemy PT-boats, 46 miles northwest of Texel with course 40°.

Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

During the day, 21 planes were on mission at the 18th Group and during the night eight planes operated in the central North Sea and off the southern Norwegian coast. At 2030 our own air reconnaissance sighted five destroyers in the inner Morray-Firth and one light cruiser in 60°.

At 1435 the PQ - convoy was newly detected by our own air reconnaissance. Positions were reported at 1540 in AB 8448, at 2140 in AB 7391 and at 2230 in AB 8172, course 50°.

According to Radio Monitoring, the radio post at Spitzbergen transmitted messages with highest priority to Murmansk at 2346 on 1 April. Shortly after midnight of 31 March, three Russian PT-boats were detected being at sea in Pumanki radio area.

2. Own Situation:

At 0558 submarine alarm was sounded off Gamvik.

At 1145 two enemy reconnaissance planes were over Kaafjord.

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Twenty-nine northbound and 45 southbound ships were escorted.

The battleship TIRPITZ is reporting her planning:

On 1 April maximum speed trial, from 2 April training time until the end of May up to which time full alarm readiness ought to be established. The extent of training arises from the time of docking period and from the frequent change in personnel which is total amounted to 20%.

For fighting the PQ-convoy, submarines were ordered to operate single-handed on to the enemy. At 2150 the order came to approach AB 6550 with maximum speed in case that the enemy could not be obtained at dawn. From 2100 good bearings were reported from our own planes.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring, three minelayers, sixteen other war vessels and the staff of the Fleet were intercepted in radio traffic in the Gulf of Finland.

2. Own Situation:

Thirty-four boats in the Baltic Sea Entrances and in the Baltic Sea twenty-two boats and twelve minesweeping planes were engaged in minesweeping. In the outlet of the Eckernfoerde-Bay one mine was swept by minesweeping plane.

Escorts without any events.

The 6th Destroyer Flotilla entered Baltiiski Port. The 6th PT-boat Flotilla transferred from Tallinn to Koplí.

Net workings were continued.

During the air raid on the afternoon of 30 April, the minesweeper M "4" was shot aleak by gunfire and had to be towed into Tallinn. Owing to close hit, the minesweeper M "3112" scored troubles with the gearing. Fire broke out on board minesweeper M "3107." Both the boats entered Aseri. Suspectedly three more planes were shot down. Therewith in total 29 Russian planes were shot down from bombing formations in the Gulf of Finland by patrol boats and escort-vessels.

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During the day, the Narva patrol will be executed near the ice border and during the night by minesweepers and patrol boats at their positions while armed fishing vessels and artillery ferry barges are lying in Aseri owing to ice situation.

No special reports on the mainland situation are submitted.

V. Submarine Warfare:

On 5 March the submarine U "66" sunk the steamer JOHN HOLT (4975 BRT) in the Gulf of Guinea and on 21 March a tanker type BRITISH CONFIDENCE. According to statement by the master who was taken prisoner, two steamers of altogether approximately 10,000 BRT were sunk from one convoy on 26 February.

No other reports are submitted from remaining areas of the Atlantic.

VI. Aerial Warfare:

During the day, approximately 100 enemy planes penetrated into the area of Cherbourg - Brest - Le Havre - Valery en Caux without executing attacks. Especially during the night of 31 March, 100 enemy planes were reported penetrating into the area of Morlaix - Brest - St. Malo - Amiens - Le Treport. The anti-aircraft emplacement Chateaudun was attacked.

Twenty enemy flights were reported in Belgium Northern France.

Reich Territory:

During the day, numerous single air reconnaissance planes were reported over various parts of the Reich territory.

During the day, five enemy penetrations into the Rhenian Westfalian industrial district and further isolated penetrations into the area of Schweinfurt - Bamberg - Rheine - Aschersleben - Stendal took place. Two enemy penetrations into the Danish area, presumably supplying agents, were observed.

Mediterranean Theater:

On 30 March the enemy attacked Sofia with 200 bombers and fighter escort which were coming from Foggia via Durazzo. Serious damage was inflicted in the middle of the town and at the railway station installations. Three enemy planes were shot down by fighters. After short time, the raid was repeated by 70 enemy planes.

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Seventeen enemy reconnaissance planes were reported flying over the Aegean and off the Albanian coast. Three hundred enemy planes were observed in the Italian front area. Besides this, airfields and transportation installations and ports in central and northern Italy were attacked. Three enemy planes were shot down.

On 31 March our own air reconnaissance discovered five steamers and one tanker heading NE north of Port Said. Eight steamers and two escort vessels were sailing 70 miles northwest of Bengasi heading NW. Mers el Kebir, Oran and Arzeu were reconnoitred by photograph.

No own missions were reported.

Eastern Area:

On 30 March 1112 own and 252 enemy missions were reported from the Eastern Front. Nine of our own planes were lost, 18 enemy planes were shot down.

During reconnaissance missions at the PQ-convoy, two of our own reconnaissance planes were lost.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea

1. Area of the Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

The convoy which was reported entering the Mediterranean on 30 March consisted of 64 freighters, eleven tankers, 17 LST's with destroyers and seven corvettes. These were considered large freighters with heavy loading on deck, planes and tanks. LST's carried LCT's on deck.

On the afternoon of 30 March, two Italian cruisers entered Gibraltar coming from the east. At 0520 on 31 March, our own air reconnaissance detected ship concentrations off Mellila, presumably USA-convoy on schedule.

At 1610 20 ships were sailing 60 miles NE of Tres Forcas and at 1819 approximately 80 ships were 20 miles north of Oran heading East presumably being the convoy which passed Gibraltar Straits on the morning of 30 March.

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Own Situation:

The submarine U "466" entering Toulon on 30 March was escorted by two minesweepers. Eight harbor defense boats were sent out for patrol in the area off Toulon. Moreover, own planes took off which dropped two bombs on the beginning of the torpedo track. No submarine chasers were available.

On noon and afternoon of 31 March, more submarines were sighted in the area of Toulon. At 1720 the army post standing South-East of Port Vendres reported an emerged submarine which was not confirmed by the vessels being at sea at this time.

Ten vessels with 2444 BRT were escorted off the southern French coast.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to photograph reconnaissance, one battleship of the TEXAS-class, one light cruiser, one large destroyer, three destroyers, one torpedo boat, one repair ship, four corvettes and LCT's, five standard freighters, one troop transport (1900 BRT), two troop transports approximately 9000 BRT each, one troop transport approximately 22000 BRT and two troop transports of 10,000 BRT each, altogether 113,000 BRT and 40 small vessels were lying in Mers el Kebir at 1600 on 31 March.

At the same time, one large destroyer, three submarines, one netlayer, 28 standard freighters with approximately 190,000 BRT, two tankers with 18000 BRT, six coastal freighters and one troop transport with approximately 6000 BRT besides 27 harbor boats were lying in Oran. At the mole, 100 single parts for landing stages and east of Oran 3400 tents were sighted.

Further thirteen standard freighters with in total 88,000 BRT were lying at Oran roads. The amount of shipping in the harbor of Arzeu could not be recognized because of the small scale of the photo which could not be evaluated. The large scale convoy heading east was detected at 2056 40 miles west of Cape Tenes by our own reconnaissance planes which were equipped with radar devices. Twenty-two bombers are to attack this large scale convoy during the night of 31 March.

At 1515 three destroyers were sailing 15 miles west of Cape Orlando. Eight freighters and two patrol vessels heading West were reported 70 miles northwest of Bengasi.

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Own Situation:

The motor minesweeper R "256" which was reported to be sunk during the air raid on 30 March in Leghorn is held afloat.

Owing to bad weather, the escort and patrol duties had to be cancelled.

Owing to continuous strong air raids and the serious breakdowns of war vessels and merchantmen depending thereon, the touching of Leghorn is temporarily closed for our own naval forces and as transloading or intermediate port for supply up to the strengthening of the anti-aircraft protection of this base.

Owing to weather conditions, the Italian PT-boats "41" and "75" had to break off the minefield task at the East coast.

After improved weather conditions, the escort and patrol service again was started during the course of day. Two TA-boats [translator's note: foreign torpedoboats] left Spezia for minefield task.

The German Naval Command Italy is reporting that the bombardment of Bastia is to be carried out by TA-boats with the Keyword "Nachbrenner." The second Air Force was asked to provide for flare dropper planes.

3. Area of the Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance on the afternoon of 30 March, busy small ship traffic took place in the coastal forwarded area, presumably for island supply. Fourteen coastal freighters and sailing ships were counted between Barletta and Brindisi. On 31 March one freighter was sailing off Brindisi, four off Bari. Three freighters were on the roads.

Five auxiliary war vessels, one large vessel, 46 sailing boats and three coastal freighters were sighted in Lissa. No construction work was seen at the isle.

Own Situation:

On the morning of 29 March, the torpedo boat TA "35" was damaged by explosion of the turbine driven ventilator after having left Fiume.

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Both on 29 and 30 March, one Siebel ferry and one Infantry boat were annihilated in Brac each day. On 30 March three coastal patrol boats and one coastal motor boat were sunk off Hvar by enemy fighter bombers. During the air raid on Cattaro on 29 March an assembly hall with unserviceable torpedoes and one air compressor was destroyed.

The places of Jelsa and Starigrad were captured at Hvar.

Owing to bomb hit, the new construction submarine-chaser "207" was fully destroyed and the new construction of submarine chaser "206" was seriously damaged.

As measure of command, the Admiral Adriatic appointed the captain (navy) Loycke Naval Shore Commander South Dalmatia in Split with immediate assumption of official duties, because now the situation is affording the increased utilization of the particular offensive experiences of the former Naval Shore Commander Albania for this focal point Dalmatia.

b. Aegean:

According to Radio Monitoring, four beaufighter planes sunk a motor sailing ship in Nios at 0925 on 30 March. At the same day between 2100 and 2300, ten or twelve enemy planes attacked Rhodes and inflicted unimportant damage by 20 bombs. Off the Northern port and merchant harbor, seven mines were dropped. Six enemy planes attacked the Kalamata battery and the port area with gunfire and dropped three or four small bombs which detonated in the port basin.

On the afternoon of 30 March, the PT-boat S "601" with 20 soldiers, the naval artillery lighter "12" with one anti-aircraft platoon, and more 20 soldiers left Patras for newly mopping-up of the isle of Oxia. According to statements made by Greece civilians, nine Italians were fetched off for the mainland by two small boats during the night of 29 March. The operation was finished without important results. The boats returned to Patras.

Owing to surprising change of weather, the submarine chasers "2106" and motor minesweeper "R 195" were separated convoy steamer CENTAUR proceeding from Piraeus to Leros.

Both the boats took shelter off the coast of Andros. The steamer CENTAUR and torpedo boat TA "16" proceeded further on. According to report of the air escort, one anti-aircraft post was washed overboard.

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At 0840 on 30 March, the Turkish steamer KREN sunk six or seven miles NNE of Rhodes outside of the territorial waters. No detonation was observed. The cause is still unknown.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to Radio Monitoring, 173 planes are to fly from air field at the Caucasian coast to the Kerch front between 0400 - 1700 on 31 March. Only unimportant small vessel traffic was recognized at the east-coast.

Own Situation:

Owing to weather conditions, the patrol line in Kerch Straits was broken off during the night of 31 March.

During the same night, the second minelaying in Dnieper-Liman was carried out as planned during the night of 31 March.

VIII. Situation Eastern Asia:

Kurile - Islands:

For a new time, single air raids were executed on the northern Kurile islands.

Marshall Islands:

According to Japanese reports, several fast task forces, including battleships and aircraft carriers, are stationed at the Marshall Islands.

On 20 March the Elon-Atoll has been occupied by USA-troops. There only was established a Japanese look-out station.

According to American reports, American bomber dropped bombs on the atolls still occupied by Japanese forces on their way to and fro from Gilbert Islands to the occupied Marshall Islands after having supplied fuel and ammunition from the isles occupied by the United States.

The Japanese bases at the Caroline Islands are often attacked from the air.

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New Guinea - Bismarck Archipelago

The USA-troops occupied the isle of Emirau, Mussau and Dyaul and therewith practically cut off the supply to the Japanese base Kaewieing. No Japanese troops were on these islands.

Up to now, the fighting at Bougainville caused many casualties. Moreover, the Japanese troops which are supplied for half a year, again started the attack against the beachhead on 24 March.

The main transloading port of New Guinea Wewag is being attacked nearly daily by the USA-Air Force with 70 - 80 planes.

According to Japanese reports, three task forces are advancing in the waters north of Ireland since 20 March. Besides this, another two task forces are to be stationed at the Salomon Islands. The center of these task forces is formed by battle ships and aircraft carriers.

Burma:

The 17th British-Indian division has been nearly fully annihilated by Japanese counter attacks on the central Chindwin. Approximately 5000 soldiers of British troops which were dropped from the air behind the Japanese front in Northern Burma and were to destroy a railway track are enclosed and are going to be annihilated according to Japanese report.

The Military Attaché Tokyo reported the following extract of General Arisue's discourse at the conference on the situation on 18 March which lasted several hours.

A. East Asia Theater:

The first Anglo-Saxon far distant aim is to separate the Japanese homeland from the South, which is well equipped with raw material, by means of concentrated attack from the East on Luzon, from the West by re-opening of the Burma Road on Southern China, French Indo-China, Siam. At the moment, Japan does nothing than clear defense fighting. Essential increasing of the Japanese armament, especially of the air force and sea transportation, is going on; important results will already reveal in autumn.

1. Pacific Area:

a. The loss of the Marshall Islands is considered to be a heavy blow against the Japanese defense. The cause

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of this loss: Japanese air inferiority, especially the want of torpedo planes, and the circumstances that the numerous islands which are difficult to be defended only are occupied partially and far too weak by naval shore units, which moreover are lacking of concentrated command.

Up to now, still no enemy landing attempt against Nauru and eastern Caroline Islands, especially Truk, were made in contrary to controverse sounding press news. At this time, the General Staff considers the isle of Markus and then Make as considerably threatened. Troops of the army now are engaged too in the defense of the Marian-Islands which would be much easier concerning the terrain and the neighbourhood of the homeland. Between the Japanese homeland and the southern areas at least 35 USA submarines are continuously operating there. The Japanese defense is insufficient and therefore the losses of ships are high and turn out to be a heavy load for command and troops.

b. East Guinea. The Japanese Division which was cut off between Finsch Harbor and Astrolabe Bay and which had fought itself back to Madang, suffering high losses, was met there by minor forces. At this time, no enemy pressure is existing along the coast, but the possibility of new enemy landing operations in the rear is imminent under certain circumstances westerly from (en clear is lacking) Japanese division, for the purpose of diversion of the New Britain defense the aim at least temporary was reached by eliminating the enemy aircraft group based at Bougainville, because two air fields were captured and a third one is in the fire range of the Japanese artillery. In meantime, new enemy troops arrived at Bougainville, and new landing attempts at the NE coast are possible. Therefore, the Japanese situation at Bougainville is remaining as critical as before. The enemy, after having landed at Cape Hoomann, the western third of New Britain was evacuated by the Japanese. The Japanese, approximately 40.000 men occupying New Britain and New Ireland, are well supplied for a long time and therefore will be able after reduction of the area and in spite of overwhelming enemy air supremacy, to fight enemy landing operations during several months. Owing to terrain difficulties and Japanese blocking measures, an enemy land attack will bring no result. Supplying New Britain etc. hardly is getting impossible, because the enemy captured several Admiralty Islands, especially because of the isle of Los Negros important by its airfield. As main aim, the Japanese command will hold Tjawomn also in regard to the possible diversion attack against New Britain.

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d. Dutch East India: At the Java - Timor - Western New Guinea Front, no enemy landing intentions are recognized at this time. The Japanese defense forces are sufficient.

2. Burma and Chungking China.

a. The Japanese attack against the southern flank of the 4th British army at the western frontier of Burma was started in the middle of March, the fact that on 17 March, after surprising crossing of the Manipur-River north of Fort White, the Indian frontier was crossed for the first time by Japanese and national Indian troops and brought the 17th British Division into a difficult situation, is giving Bose effective possibilities for Propaganda. But this attack too, however, again will only be of local importance, just as the attack in February north of Akiab. Extended British countermeasures and the start off with no doubts prepared British-Chinese large scale attack for reopening of the Burma Road will become but possible after the monsoon, that is to say approximately at November. The defense of it will be certain.

b. Chungking - China. From enemy and Japanese part, no increasing fighting is to be expected. Previously, the USA-China Air Force will not be able in executing large air raids outside of China concerning its number supplies.

3. Sovietic Far East:

The Japanese General Staff is convinced that at this time neither a closer Russian-American cooperation nor attack from The Russian Far East will be counted on. But the Sovietic Far-East forces have not changed. Even the otherwise conventional tribute of tribes was not recognized in November. To Japanese part, no diminution of troops stationed in Manchuria, but some single release of army air units and besides this evacuation of precious occupation troops in exchange against younger ones.

4. American mode of fighting, armament etc.

a. In case of landing operations besides heavy aircraft support also gunfire and rocket firing from fighting ships and partially from landing craft (up to now no rocket throwers or rockets captured). Often smoke screening of the landing craft and the first beachheads too especially those of the parachutists. Dropping of smoke pots by planes and in other cases as target marking for ships guns.

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In single cases, the ship guns seem to use special range adjustment ammunition. Thanks to their superabundant technical equipment and good training landing areas for the engineer troops, the proceedings of USA-landing operations are going surprisingly quick and smooth. The fighting power of the first landed troops is very high (light tanks, numerous mine throwers, flame throwers). In case of need, additional supply from the air.

b. During battle, the cross-country mobility and the constructing efficiency of the USA-forces is astonishing. Therefore, often they found their way into the flank of the Japanese. Very disturbing is the mass firing of the USA mine throwers. In reverse, the Anglo Americans are very sensible against night attack or generally talked surprising attacks.

c. There were two things which were emphasized by Arisue as the most important Japanese experience from the last USA-landing operation. For the first, the most efficient weapon against transports and fighting ships: torpedo plane. Furthermore, all has to be done to prevent the first landing of the enemy. In case a deep beachhead is built up, counter attacks are very difficult.

B. 2. Anglo-Saxon Front:

If the Anglo-American will jeopardize a large scale attack would be very doubtful. If yes, concentrated landing operation in France (Channel coast and at both sides of Bordeaux and at both sides of Toulon) seem to be possible according to the Japanese General Staff's opinion. Perhaps this dared to be preceded by enemy landing operations NW of Rome and the oppression of Spain and by stirring up riots in France etc. Besides the landing operation in France, a more unimportant landing in North-Norway principally in purpose of exposing political pressure to Finland, would be possible. The Japanese General Staff considers a landing in Albania etc. less probable, because Anglo-Saxon occupation of the Balkans would be in contrary to the Russian desires.

3. Up to now, the enemy air raids are said not to have hit the German war economy decisively, so that the construction of new weapons apparently makes good progress.

4. The German reserve troops being in assembling state, are estimated to at the highest 40 divisions.

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Appendix:

The position of the General Arisue corresponds perhaps to those of the former German Quartermaster General.

The Group North/Fleet has been informed in copy (of the cypher 4.) concerning the American mode of fighting, armament etc.

GLOSSARY

MAS-Boot

Italian type of PT-boat.

SG "15" (Schnellgeleit)

French aviso-type vessel used by the Germans.

WLM/AX

A British-type aerial mine. The official British designation is PAM (parachute air mine).

Zaunkoenig-torpedo

Acousting homing torpedo effective against an enemy not going over 18 knots.

Berlin Geraet

A 9,1 cm wave length airborne radar set utilizer for blind bombing and as navigational aid.

BMW

Bayrische Motorenwerke.

op

Representative of the Navy (Naval Liaison Officer).

Aphrodite

A submarine device to confuse enemy planes; has the same reflective reaction as the conning tower of a submarine (Radar Decoy Balloon).

EMC (Einheitsmine)

Standard mine, type C. A contact mine against surface vessels.

EMF

German moored influence mine.

SK (Schnellade Kanone)

Rapid firing cannon.

CB U-Boote ?

Presumably Italian type submarine, midget type?

A₁ Zuendmittel

Accoustic mine firing device.

LMB/S

German aerial mine type B/S.

AA₁ Zuendmittel

Subsonic mine unit.

Aakkustisch mit Tiefstton

Accoustic mine with subsonic firing mechanism.

Wuerzburggeraet

Anti-aircraft radar equipment.

Flum-Geraet

Flugmelde-Geraet

Apparently radar devices which reported approaching enemy aircraft and perhaps directed fire control of AA batteries.

Hohentwiel-Geraet

Anti-aircraft radar equipment.

TMB (Torpedomine)

Mines ejected through the torpedo-tubes of a submarine.
Three types were used: A, B, C.

RMB (regulaere Mine B)

Standard mine type B.

UMB (U-Bootsabwehrmine)

Anti-submarine mine type B.

EMR

Standard mine type R.

MA₂

Battery fuse ignition of parachute mines.

ELM J Spr.

British aerial mine with induction firing mechanism against mine-exploding vessels.

DM₁ - Zuendung

(usually followed by a number). Firing mechanism in mines.
Pressure unit with magnetic firing device.

AL Flakbattr.

AL-Anfangsladung

Initial charge.

Schweine

?

FAT-Torpedo
Feder Apparat Torpedo
(Schleifenlaeufer)

Torpedo describing a course of an 8 and thus having a better chance of hitting target (covers larger area than conventional Torpedo).

FK - Fernlekkoeper
Guided missile.

KS u. LS-Boote
Kuesten S-Boot - Coastal PT-boat; Leichte S-Boot - light PT-boat.

E-Mine
Electric mine.

T5 Torpedo
Submarine torpedo not air driven; presumably electrically or Ingolin-driven (Walter propulsion).

Kuestenjaegerboote
Boats presumably belonging to the Division Brandenburg.

Nachlauftorpedo
Following up torpedo by means of acoustic homing device.

Suchtorpedo Oskar
British type of acoustic homing torpedo.

K4
Dutch torpedoboat.

Zick-zack-Laeufer (Geraet)
Device effecting zigzagging course of a torpedo, presumably similar to LUT course setting mechanism.

HFG (Hohl Stab Fernraeumgeraet)
Whale; float type magnetic blaster.

KMA Mine - RMH Mine
Regular mine type A - Regular mine type H.

DME-Zuendung
Druckmagnet-Einrichtung
Firing mechanism in mines: pressure unit with magnetic firing device.

Bunte-Boot

German midget submarine of Bunte type, produced by Flandern-Werke Luebeck.

Neger

A one-man human torpedo probably identical with Marder I.

Thomas II-boat

?

Loedicke-Boot

?

Agathe-Boote

Presumably British type vessel.

Kaiks

?

Freischuetz

Code word for the capture of Vis and other Adriatic Islands in 1943.

ATB-Mine

Ankertaumine type E

Moored mine type E.

EMR/K

Standard mine type R/K.

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