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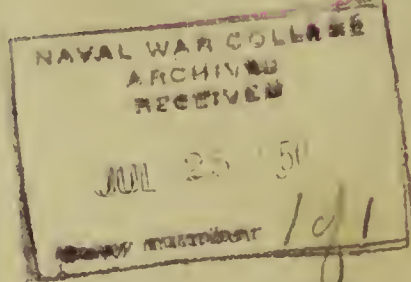
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WAR DIARY

German Naval Staff Operations Division



PART A VOLUME 52

DECEMBER 1943

DECLASSIFIED AND DOWNGRADED BY 5 MAY 1972, SUBJ:
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WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN NAVAL STAFF

(OPERATIONS DIVISION)

PART A

DECEMBER 1943

Chief, Naval Staff	Grand Admiral Doenitz
Chief of Staff, Naval Staff:	Vice Admiral Meisel
Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff:	Rear Admiral Wagner

Volume 52

begun: 1 Dec. 1943
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OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOREWORD

1. The Office of Naval Intelligence has undertaken to translate important parts of the War Diary of the German Naval Staff. The present volume entitled War Diary of the German Naval Staff, Operations Division, Part A, Volume 52 is the sixteenth one of the series to appear. Other volumes will follow shortly.

2. The War Diaries, Part A, are important because they contain a day to day summary of the information available to the German Naval Staff and the decisions reached on the basis thereof. Together with the Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1945, and the Fuehrer Directives, 1939-1945, which have been published by this office, 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 microfilm library of Naval Records and Library.

3. Due to the cost of publication, only a limited number of copies could be made; it is therefore desirable that the copies which have been distributed are made available to other offices which may be interested.

Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Chief, Naval Ordnance Division calls attention to a report that a new British mine has become known which cannot be swept. The report was also submitted to Naval Staff and is being investigated further.

II. Report of Chief, Operations Branch, Operations Division:
Operations Division, Army General Staff reports:

"Commanding Admiral, Black Sea was asked by Naval Group South to release the naval forces at present engaged in landing fighting with Army Group A for new assignments in the Aegean and Adriatic Sea.

Though fully acknowledging the Navy's justifiable demand for a return of specialists to their particular duties, in view of the present critical situation High Command, Army considers removal of naval forces engaged in hard fighting on the Crimean and Dnieper fronts out of the question just now. It is planned to release naval forces as soon as the tense situation has relaxed."

Chief of Staff, Naval Staff orders that a report be sent to the Armed Forces High Command pointing out that the conquest of the Dodecanese Islands will have been in vain if an adequate occupation force is not maintained there. The main part of the occupation troops should be furnished by the Army. In addition, Group South is to submit a detailed survey of occupation forces which will provide a basis for planning new port commands and other naval offices.

III. Quartermaster General reports that according to the statement of the Naval (Ship) Construction Division the conversion of the naval landing craft into naval landing craft (artillery) will retard the dates of completion of 22 submarines.

Chief of Staff decides that the matter is to be submitted to Commander in Chief, Navy by Chief, Naval (Ship) Construction Division.

IV. In order to inform the Fuehrer regarding the actual war situation in the southwest Pacific as desired, Chief, Naval Staff requires exact data concerning recent Japanese successes.

Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has ordered an inquiry to be sent to the Naval Attache in Tokyo. Further steps will be taken by Intelligence Division, Naval Staff.

V. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff announces that Headquarters "Lanke" can be occupied by Submarine Division, Naval Staff as from 10 Dec. It is hoped that Operations Division, Naval Staff will be able to move in by 15 Jan. 1944.

VI. Chief, Naval Ordnance Division gives a survey on the effects of the recent air attacks on Berlin as far as armament production is concerned. The greater part of the Speer Ministry was put out of action. Work is being continued subject to some delay. The destruction of the plant for the production of the 3 cm anti-aircraft guns in Tegel will be most felt; the first guns should be installed aboard the submarines in January. Also the sub-committee for mine production was completely destroyed; It will be some time before a more detailed total survey is available.

Special Items.

I. The Fuehrer issued the following instructions to Commanding General, Armed Forces, West:

"I approve the directive submitted for the preparation and prosecution of long-range warfare against Great Britain with all special weapons in question, to be carried out by the Corps Headquarters 65th Army Corps, (special duty). I authorize the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West to issue all requisite orders for the employment of the special weapons and preparation thereof to the offices of the German Air Force, Navy, Organization Todt and Reich Labor Services in the west."

The executive orders of the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command as per 1/Skl 3559/43 Gkdos. Chfs., are contained in the file of 1/Skl op. "Fuehrerweisungen".

II. As regards the Fuehrer directive concerning sea transport in the Black Sea, Aegean and Adriatic areas the Operations Staff, Quartermaster, Armed Forces High Command issued the following instructions to Naval Staff:

"In the executive orders to the Fuehrer Directives the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces High Command has asked the Navy for current information regarding the probable sea transport capacity in the above sea areas. Armed Forces, Operations Staff therefore requests an answer to the following questions:

I. What suitable shipping space and small ship shipping space is available?

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2. Will it be possible to satisfy transport requirements under the existing conditions with regard to personnel and shipping space? A summary of the transport requirements of the Chief Supply and Administration Offices of the Navy General Staff according to the latest position is also submitted.

3. Will the available escort vessels suffice for the protection of the transports?

4. What measures are under way in the harbors of the above sea areas in order to guarantee a current replenishment of small ships?

5. At a general estimate how many small ships will become available in the near future? (Deadlines to be given).

6. High Command, Navy is asked to state how soon an answer to the questions 1-5 can be expected. The offices mentioned in the address are asked to send all information required for the review of the sea transport situation in the southeast to the High Command, Navy as soon as possible. The Armed Forces High Command realizes how difficult it is to obtain a clear picture of the sea transport situation. On the other hand, the mastering of the existing sea transport crisis constitutes the first prerequisite for the intensified continuation of warfare in the southeast area ordered by the Fuehrer. Thus it is most urgent that a clear review of the shipping situation in these sea areas is submitted to the Supreme Command as soon as possible."

III. Group South reports:

The Chief of the German Naval Command, Constanta submitted the following report:

1. The quarters of the Italian enlisted personnel were found occupied by the Rumanian Navy on 1 Dec. at 0400. According to a statement made by the Rumanian Lieutenant present there the Italian personnel have been taken in custody by the Rumanians.

2. A final discussion with Captain Macellariu showed that on 30 Nov. at 2300 the Commander of the Italian Submarine Flotilla, Commander Torri, had given him a written declaration according to which a change had taken place in the Italian military and political situation since 9 Sept., and that they were no longer willing to fight on our side. They handed over the flotilla, including the personnel and material to the Rumanians. After that Captain Macellariu, on orders from Bucharest, took over the personnel and material, and was ordered not to inform the Chief of the German Naval Command until after the order had been carried out.

3. I pointed out that the Italian Submarine Flotilla had volunteered to continue the fight on the German side under the command of Admiral Black Sea, giving a written guarantee, and had hence become part of the German Armed Forces. The Flotilla was quartered in Constanta in buildings of the German Armed Forces and was paid, equipped and looked after by the German Armed Forces. The material was considered as German property. Thus I had to lodge a protest against the measures taken. Captain M. referred to the orders he had received from Bucharest and said that the matter would have to be taken up there; as the Italians wore the Italian uniform and flew the Italian flag they were to be regarded as Italians.

4. The German command which had been ordered to take over the boats discovered that the Italian submarines were flying Rumanian colors.

5. From a statement made by an Italian master sergeant on the evening of 30 Nov. it must be concluded that the whole affair was planned by the Rumanians and Italians some days beforehand. Remark appended by Group South: Further investigations are in progress."

IV. Group South reports as follows with regard to the transfer of personnel from the command of Admiral, Black Sea:

"Admiral Black Sea was ordered by the Group to examine the possibility of disbanding the Naval Shore Command, Ukraine and transferring the personnel for the establishment of a Naval Shore Command, Dodecanese. Admiral, Black Sea replied that considering the present situation a transfer was not at present possible. Army Group A replied: Considering the present situation and the forces available it is not possible to transfer even one of the naval battalions engaged in the fighting. However, there will be no objections if Commander Bennecke requisitions a limited number of men from the naval battalions employed in the area of the Army Group for new commitments with the Naval Shore Command.

Remark appended by Group South: This refers chiefly to the Command Eichstaedt, 375 men. The Group estimates that it will be possible to transfer 450 men in all. The telegram from Army Group A does not take into account the overall situation of the Navy in the southeast. The establishment of the Naval Shore Command Dodecanese depends entirely on the personnel which has been asked for. Group South asks the High Command, Navy to enforce the withdrawal of the naval personnel engaged in Army tasks, or to produce the personnel necessary for the establishment of the Naval Shore Command Dodecanese from elsewhere."

(See Conference on the situation with Chief of Staff, paragraph II).

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V. In reference to the memorandum on the development of the personnel side of the Submarine Program as of 1 Nov. 1943, the Recruitment Division, General Naval Administration Bureau transmitted on 1 Dec. a memorandum on the same subject by Commander in Chief, Navy and the reply made by the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command as well as a further memorandum on a report by the Commander in Chief, Navy on the probably completion of the submarine program and ways of stepping this up by severe economic measures.

For copy of the letter see: Record of 1/Skl III a.

An order from the Fuehrer regarding the saving of one million men from Armed Forces personnel to cover requirements at the front as per 1/Skl 40547/43 geh. is to be found in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

The data gives a clear idea of the very critical personnel situation and the difficulties which will be entailed in carrying out our plans.

Situation 1 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty seven planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay. Five single British vessels and one U. S. vessel were located in the outer convoy area between 25 and 60 degrees North between 1134 and 1954.

Our air reconnaissance reported five ships sailing south-east of the Isle of Wight on easterly course.

An unconfirmed report from the Badoglio Embassy in Madrid states that the landing in France is scheduled to take place this week. The Intelligence Division has received independent reports from several agents stating that French circles are expecting an Anglo-American landing to take place this week at Nice and one on the north coast of France.

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2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Ten enemy fighter bombers attacked craft of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West near Ile de Croix at 1200. Slight damage and casualties to personnel.

While the destroyers are being transferred back to the Gironde river, joint exercises will be carried out during the night of 1 Dec. All vessels are scheduled to enter the Gironde river in the night of 2 Dec.

Channel Coast:

The Commander, 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla intends to carry out minelaying task "Luzie" with six boats of the 4th and 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla during the night of 2 Dec.

Owing to stormy weather no naval forces operated in the Channel on 1 Dec.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

Naval anti-aircraft artillery put up a barrage against heavy enemy bomber and fighter formations in the Flushing area between 1049 - 1332.

At 1600 the convoy 470 proceeded on its journey from Borkum to the Hook. One mine was swept off Norderney and one off Den Helder.

Four convoys totalling 41,584 BRT were escorted in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Over the North Sea 19 planes were detected in the morning and eight planes in the afternoon. On 30 Nov. enemy planes were reported in the Petsamo - Vardoe areas as well as the areas Stavanger and Bergen. Eleven twin-engined mono-planes penetrated the area north of North Fjord at 1427 on 1 Dec.

According to a report from Admiral, West Coast it is presumed that the enemy employed 8.8 cm rocket bombs in the course of his attack on one of our convoys.

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According to a deciphered radio message the transport minesweeper HOPEWELL returning from Sweden announced that she would put into Hull at 1000. At 1850 the boat was ordered to proceed on the coastal route to Immingham.

On the basis of further deciphered radio messages it is assumed that a convoy bound for Russia is at sea. The convoy received its first radio message from the British Admiralty at 1517 on 27 Nov. Radio monitoring observed an unusual increase in the radio traffic between Great Britain and Archangel, probably in connection with PQ convoy.

At 0500 submarine U "636" reported searchlights and gunfire in AB 6391, probably from an independent ship. At 1029 submarine U "307" reported a convoy, probably westbound, in AB 6348. After being depthcharged by three escort vessels for 4 hours, the boat lost contact with the ships.

Own Situation:

By order of Group North, the Naval Task Force was ordered to 3 hours' notice as from 1303.

The submarines were ordered to head for AB 6180 with maximum speed and in case no contact was made with the unit, to patrol the line from AB 5573 to 8319 from 0700 on 2 Dec.

The 6th Destroyer Flotilla consisting of the destroyers LODY, RIEDEL and Z "31" left Stavanger at 1500 on an exploratory sweep for the minelaying task. The destroyers will return to Christiansand South. Forty one ships were escorted both north and south. Nine ships had to remain in harbor because of shortage of escorts.

During the night of 30 Nov. a Petsamo - Kirkenes convoy was shelled by batteries on the Fisher Peninsula.

IV, Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

In the course of the day single planes penetrated into the coastal area of Kurgolovo Peninsula as well as into the area of Windau and the Isle of Moon.

Captured members of the crew of a Russian torpedo plane stated that in addition to torpedoes British magnetic mines are also being used.

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2. Own Situation:

Minesweeping, convoy and escort services were carried out without special event.

One ELM mine was cleared by a minesweeping plane in the passage through the skerries west of Kaunisari.

Small coastal minelaying craft put to sea in order to carry out the minelaying task "Zander II".

V. Submarine Warfare.

Submarine U "516" sank 17,000 BRT of shipping off Toulon. Submarine U "761" reported two destroyers continuously in AL 1760 and 1750; submarine U "843" reported an air attack in CF 3160.

No other special reports from Group "Weddigen" have been received.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the course of aerial combats in the Bay of Biscay one Mosquito and one Beaufighter were shot down. Three Ju 88's failed to return to their bases.

During the night of 2 Dec. three long-range fighters were sent out to operate against London.

Strong enemy formations with fighter protection entered the west area during the day and carried out attacks against airfields. In addition the town and station as well as the Bavarian Motorworks plant at Albert were attacked.

Between 1750 and 2005 30-35 planes were operating over the Kattegat, probably minelaying. Of our own 36 night fighters which were operating one plane was shot down near Esbjerg.

2. German Reich Territory:

Between 1120 and 1240 250-300 Fortresses with strong fighter protection entered the Ruhr area.

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The fighter escort formation turned away over Holland on opposite course. A covering force consisting of 250 planes was flying in the area of Ghent - Boulogne at about 1300. The bomber formation dropped bombs on 10-12 different localities including Gummersbach. Altogether 251 fighters and long-range fighters of the 3rd Air Force and Air Commander, Central Area went up in defense and shot down 18 enemy planes, mostly four-engined bombers.

The losses in the last three attacks on Berlin are estimated at 1,700 dead, 1,500 missing, 14,000 wounded, as well as 400,000 homeless persons.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our air force was engaged mainly on reconnaissance duties.

A fighter formation of Air Commander, Southeast was transferred to Mostar for the reinforcement of the forces in the Adriatic Sea.

Strong enemy forces attacked the city and airfield of Turin as well as the main road between Spezia and Parma between 1345 and 1445. Six Lightenings were shot down by own fighters. During the day altogether 42 planes were located by our reconnaissance in the Dalmatian coastal area and over the Aegean Sea.

During the night railway workshops at Florence were attacked by ten enemy planes.

4. Eastern Front:

The 5th Air Force reported at 1514 that the DICTO was anchored off Halloway within Swedish territorial waters; an enemy submarine was sighted 120 miles north of the Shetland Islands.

No special reports have been received from the 4th Air Force.

The Chief of the Air Force, Operations Staff requests a decision as to whether in consideration of the increasing importance of Marseille the extra anti-aircraft protection requested for Toulon can be shelved. As regards the employment of smoke in the defense of Toulon, information is requested as to whether the floating smoke carriers and the personnel necessary to man them have been got ready.

The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff will deal with the matter.

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VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group, West:

Enemy Situation:

The French battleship LORRAINE escorted by three destroyers left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean at 1915.

On 29 Nov. two transports put in to Malaga in order to take French refugees aboard.

On 29 Nov. at 0800 Ceuta reported an eastbound convoy consisting of 48 ships escorted by three destroyers and five escort vessels. On 30 Nov. a convoy consisting of four transports and two command boats was sighted off Tres Forcas heading for the west; at 1800 a French cruiser from the Mediterranean was off Punta Carnero heading for the Atlantic.

According to radio monitoring an important U. S. Convoy from the Atlantic passed the Straits of Gibraltar on 30 Nov. at 2200.

On 1 Dec. at 1712 our air reconnaissance sighted seven ships in CH 8394 proceeding westwards and at 1735 30 merchantmen and five destroyers in CH 9465 heading for the east.

Own Situation:

One steamer (4,200 BRT) under escort off the south coast of France.

The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff approved the assignment of the Italian yacht ALICE to the 6th Escort Flotilla as requested by Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West.

According to a report from the German Naval Liaison Command at Toulon the JEAN DE VIENNE and the flotilla leader AIGLE capsized after being hit by bombs in the course of the air attack on Toulon. The dispatch boat IMPETUEUSE was heavily damaged and the dispatch boat CHAMOIS was sunk. The torpedo boat BALLISTE and the supply ship AUDE also sank.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

A convoy consisting of 30-40 ships was sighted 50 miles north of Stromboli heading for Messina on 30 Nov. at 2104.

In the evening of 30 Nov. air reconnaissance observed slight traffic of single ships off the Gulf of Naples, south-south-west of Salerno and in the Gulf of Taranto.

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On 1 Dec. at 2015 our air reconnaissance sighted 35 merchantmen on a course of 170 degrees, off the Gulf of Gaeta.

No reports are available from the area Corsica -Sardinia.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 28 Nov. at 0400 ten boats were sailing in the Drin Gulf. On 30 Nov. Durazzo was shelled, probably by destroyers. Our own artillery was only able to reply with a few salvos, as the enemy was only visible for a short time.

Own Situation:

PT boat S "61" entered the harbor of Venice for engine repairs. It is concluded from a teletype from Group South to Commander Submarines, Mediterranean that a combined operation for the mopping up of the large strongly held islands between Solta and Mljet will commence on 3 Dec., in order to clear the coastal route for the supply of Dalmatia. The occupation forces on these islands are continuously reinforced and supplied from Italian harbors by sea. Commander Submarines has been asked to detail submarines for a short operation to halt this traffic.

To this Commander, Submarines (Mediterranean) reports that the only available submarine U "596" was ordered to operate in CJ 63 - 66 as well as in the western half of CK 41 until further notice. The boat is permitted to attack all objectives, but in the northern half of 63-41 CJ only those definitely identified as enemy.

Three Siebel ferries and two infantry landing craft assembled in Zara for the intended operation against the islands.

b. Aegean Sea:

Nothing to report.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 30 Nov. air reconnaissance detected a passenger ship (3,500 BRT) sailing under cover of the Turkish Black

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Sea Coast on unknown course; on 1 Dec. at 1305 a coastal steamer was sighted also sailing under cover of the Turkish coast in 3440 East on an easterly course.

Radio monitoring located only slight movement of small craft.

Own Situation:

During the night of 1 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch was manned by five naval landing craft. No supply traffic was observed. At dawn our vessels shelled the beachhead at Eltigen. During the night of 1 Dec. two minelayers and five motor minesweepers are scheduled to operate off Eltigen.

Four naval landing craft were transferred from Feodosia to Sevastopol for repairs. Three naval landing craft have left Sevastopol for Feodosia; they are ready for operations.

Both the naval landing craft which ran aground near Kossa Tussla have been completely destroyed by our artillery. Of the crews five men were saved; some of them were probably driven on to the enemy coast. The leader of the unit, Lt. Bastian was killed during the rescue operations with an assault boat.

In the evening of 30 Nov. and on 1 Dec. there were repeated enemy air attacks on Kamysh Burun. In the course of these attacks one naval landing craft was destroyed, while three other boats were more or less heavily damaged.

In Otchakov one combined operations ferry and one combined operations assault boat were destroyed in the course of an enemy air attack.

One minesweeping plane was shot down in the course of mine-sweeping operations in Dniepr-Liman.

VIII. Situation in East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

Churchill, Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek met in Cairo. There can be no doubt that warfare and policy in the Far East and in the Pacific area was the subject of the discussions. Further signs of a revival of the war effort against Japan, for which the United States has been striving for some time, lead to the conclusion that the discussions were not merely designed to encourage the Chinese ally. The increasing pressure on the Japanese southern positions speak for itself.

It is reported that Churchill and Roosevelt continued their journey eastwards, in order to meet with Stalin, probably in Teheran in the near future. If these rumors are correct it must be admitted that the diplomatic success achieved by Churchill and Eden in Moscow has been further heightened. If Stalin agrees to meet again outside Moscow, the inclusion of Russia in a binding coalition would be rated as an even greater success on the part of the Anglo-Americans than that already gained at the Moscow Conference. However, the most important conclusion to be drawn from it is to what extent the Russian need for military support and supplies from her Allies still continues, or has even increased.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff:

I. Quartermaster Division reports on the state of negotiations regarding the strengthening of air defense at Toulon. The transfer of further batteries from the islands on the west coast of France requires the approval of the Fuehrer. The Chief, Naval Staff has ordered a fresh representation to be made to the Chief of General Staff, German Air Force.

II. Quartermaster Division, Submarine Section:

a. It is to be determined in how far the two former Italian (transport) submarines, which will be completed by the end of this year, are to be manned by Italian personnel.

Chief, Naval Staff points out that the action of the Italian CB boat crews in Constanta in breaking oath has brought about a new situation with regard to the promise to Captain Grossi.

Meanwhile Operations Division had passed on to the Armed Forces High Command via the Operations Staff, Navy the report concerning the matter made by the German General attached to the High Command of the Rumanian Armed Forces. From this report it was gathered that the orders of the German General as well as of Group South for the strictest screening, in order to prevent the allegedly imminent revolt, did

not reach the German naval offices in Constanta in time. The Italian quarters were already occupied by the Rumanians on the evening of 30 Nov., the handing over of the boats to the Rumanians having been discussed in detail beforehand. The German General and the German Naval Staff lodged a severe protest with the Rumanians pointing out that the Italian boats which had been until then clearly subordinate to Admiral Black Sea, were part of the German Armed Forces, and that to hand them over to the Rumanians without German approval was out of the question. Ambassador Ritter was informed direct by the Armed Forces, Operations Staff. Quite apart from the question of whether the boats can be taken over by the German Navy, the German Ambassador intends to lodge a protest against the action of the Italian Flotilla Commander with the Duce as well as with the Rumanian government. Commander in Chief, Navy will decide whether the Italian boats are to be taken over by the German Navy. During the evening the situation discussion the Fuehrer was of the opinion that, if the boats were not going to prove of very much use anyway, no very severe action should be taken.

Chief, Naval Staff has decided that for the time being the question of manning the Italian submarines shall remain in abeyance. The new midget submarines at present being completed in Italy are to be manned exclusively by German personnel. It is to be suggested to the Armed Forces High Command that the Italians who broke oath be handed over to Germany. The boats can perhaps be left to the Rumanians, but dockyard space and the like required for our own boats must remain at our disposal.

In connection with this Group South reports:

"1. In the Adriatic the Italian torpedo boat PILO broke away from escort service and went over to the enemy during the night of 25 Nov. The Italian PT boat "18" also went over to the enemy while on escort service during the night of 18 Nov. After presumably lengthy discussions with the Rumanians the CB flotilla has now handed over personnel and material to Rumania.

2. In all cases it is the duty of officers and crews first of all to volunteer to continue the flight on the German side.

The sudden change of attitude on the part of the CB flotilla is even more surprising since immediately after the Badoglio revolt the flotilla under the Flotilla Commander volunteered to continue the fight, and was ordered into action.

3. In all these cases the continuous and intensive enemy propaganda has proved very successful; it has been difficult to control it, and also to prevent the propaganda exercising considerable influence. We cannot see yet how far the measures which are known to have been taken against Italian prisoners of war and military internees have influenced the revolts.

Thus in future there will be no question of naval units being exclusively manned and commanded by Italian personnel.

4. The Group is of the opinion that should the establishment of a new Italian Navy be approved, the formation of floating units within Italian home waters should be avoided, as there would be great temptation to escape to Anglo-American occupied Italy. In addition it again proves the necessity of intensifying propaganda directed at Italians still within the German sphere of influence."

b. Armed Forces High Command has approved the enlargement of the submarine base at Constanta if carried out in easy stages.

III. Chief, Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reports on the damage caused to armament production by the air attacks on Berlin (see War Diary 1 Dec.).

IV. Chief, Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quarter-master Division, Naval Staff reports on plan of organization for the Dodecanese (see War Diary 20 and 22 Nov.): Establishment of the Defense Command Dodecanese, headquarters at Porto Lago under the command of Admiral Aegean, drawing upon the personnel that has become available by the closing down of the Naval Shore Command, Ukraine. Port Commands with incorporated Naval Control Service Offices in Porto Lago and Carlowski (Samos) as well as Port Commanders in Stampalia and Cos, are to be established under the Naval Shore Command Dodecanese.

The Chief, Naval Staff has agreed to this.

In Highly Restricted Circles:

V. Army Situation:

Heavy defensive fighting is going on in the area south of Cherkassy. The enemy attacks are concentrated on the line Smolensk - Minsk, where 22 rifle divisions are engaged in the battle. The positions were held though three of our own divisions were withdrawn.

Montgomery's offensive in Italy, already reported, has shown comparatively little success so far.

VI. Chief, Naval Intelligence Division reports on allegedly authentic information regarding the Turko-British negotiations, see copy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.

VII. Report from Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff:

a. In reference to the Fuehrer Directive 51, Group North/Fleet has asked for a decision as to whether it will

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be possible by the beginning of next year to have about ten submarines permanently available for immediate action in one of the South Norwegian ports, and whether the entire training forces of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines in the Baltic, as far as they are needed for the execution of the operation, can be engaged on military tasks as soon as the key-word "Wallenstein" is issued. In addition, it is intended to assign Commander Schuetze, who will presumably be in charge of submarine operations, and his staff to Group North once the key-word is issued. Furthermore it is intended to transfer Lt. Frauenheim to the Staff of Group North. Finally it is planned to establish an office of Commander, Submarines, Baltic whose duty it will be to prevent the Russians breaking out of the Gulf of Finland and to control Swedish waters. In such an event Group North reserves the command of all other sea operations to itself.

Naval Staff approved these proposals with the following reservations:

1. It is not intended to transfer submarines to South Norway permanently as long as there are no positive signs of an imminent landing operation in this area.

2. The project with regard to Captain Frauenheim is agreed to provided that the chief task of this officer, the operation of the midget submarines, is not affected by it.

3. Naval Command, East shall retain principal command in the Baltic. All forces engaged in the fight against Russia will therefore be subordinate to Naval Command, Baltic. If, for example, a direct link between the warfare in the Baltic and the North Sea is brought about by Sweden entering the war, the Naval Staff will order Group North to take over command in the Baltic as well.

4. It is to be decided in conjunction with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines whether the designation Commander, Submarines, Baltic Sea is advisable, as it can be mistaken for Commander, Submarines, East.

Chief, Naval Staff has consented to this.

b. The Naval Staff considers that under the present circumstances the operation of the SCHARNHORST during the dark months would, aside from the experiences made on 31 Dec. be both practicable and promise success. The employment of destroyers against the escort forces of the enemy convoys would hold out little chance of success and be highly dangerous for the destroyers. Of course, the operation of the battleship would depend on adequate air reconnaissance. In view of the critical situation on the eastern front and the entire war situation, we can no longer take the responsibility of withholding such a valuable offensive weapon.

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Chief, Naval Staff is of same opinion and wonders whether it would not be advisable to recall Admiral Kummets from his leave. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff takes the view that the Commander, Destroyers and the Commander of the SCHARNHORST are in every way able to carry out the task.

As far as this question is concerned the Chief, Naval Staff reserves the right to make the decision himself.

Special Items.

I. Group South transmits a report from Admiral, Black Sea on the employment of naval batteries in that area. Copy as per 1/Skl 41422/43 Gkdos., see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

II. Radio monitoring report No. 47/43 contains a summary of enemy information gained from radio deciphering and radio monitoring for the period 15 to 28 Nov. 43.

Note: For operations of planes based on the Azores see Page 7.

Situation 2 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty planes were observed operating over the Bay of Biscay. One British vessel was located in each of the following - 1950, 1952 and 2306, in the area southwest of Porcupine Bank.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla trails were shifted to

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4 Dec. as the destroyer Z "24" is temporarily out of action. Destroyers Z "32", "37" and H "I" are being transferred from Concarneau to the Le Verdon roadstead.

Two mines were cleared off La Pallice. The convoy service, including a steamer laden with ore (3,630 BRT) from Royen to Bilbao, was carried out according to plan.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 1 Dec. the 5th PT Boat Flotilla carried out a torpedo attack against the west-east convoy detected by our air reconnaissance: it was protected by three destroyers and two to three groups of motor gun boats as well as further escort vessels. One steamer (1,000 BRT) was sunk 4 miles south of Beachy Head, while several torpedoes fired at the destroyers missed their targets. On account of the proximity of the coast and the enemy situation our boats could not follow the convoy and continue the operation.

During the night of 1 Dec. the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla laid the minefield L 3 as planned, and then put in to Le Havre. The minelaying task L 4 will be carried out by six torpedo boats during the night of 2 Dec.

Altogether seven convoys totalling 9,120 BRT were escorted in the Channel Island area.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

Due to unfavorable weather conditions the convoy "470" has not yet left the Borkum roadstead. The minesweeping and mine clearance operations were partially hindered by stormy weather.

Four convoys totalling 2,842 BRT were escorted in Zeeland Waters and in the Zuider Zee.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Twenty-three planes were located operating over the northern North Sea.

No reconnaissance reports have yet been received from the

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submarine operating against the expected QP convoy.

A meteorological plane sighted a formation consisting of three ships of an unknown type sailing in AB 6813 (140 miles southwest of Bear Island) at high speed on westerly course at 1115. Six BV 138's sent out on reconnaissance did not achieve any success.

One of our air force listening posts suspects a carrier in the sea area northeast of Jan Mayen on the basis of intercepted British radio telephony traffic and a radio location.

Own Situation:

The 6th Destroyer Flotilla consisting of the destroyers Z "31", RIEDEL and LODY carried out the exploratory sweep during the night of 1 Nov. according to plan and put in to Kristiansand South at 1025.

Commander, Submarines, Norway ordered the submarine group "Eisenbart" to remain in the patrol line at 2200 if no contact with the enemy was made, and to proceed to the patrol line from AB 5531 to 5967 on 3 Dec. at 0400.

The STEINBRINK passed to the east of Kristiansand South at 0732.

Due to faults in the line no reports were received from Admiral, Polar Coast. In the remaining areas, 29 ships were escorted to the north and 40 ships to the south. Two ships remained in harbor.

Special Items.

Group North Fleet requested that in addition to the Italian special craft, the captured craft which have become available in the meantime and are suitable for operations commandos, should be placed at the disposal of Group North/Fleet.

The following craft come under this heading:

1. A captured PT supply boat from the Skagerrak (at present lying in Kiel).

2. A captured Norwegian PT boat of the 30th PT Boat Flotilla, captured off Bergen.

3. A two-man submarine, captured off Bergen on 20 Nov.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff decided that the captured PT supply boat should be engaged in operations against British PT supply boats in the Skagerrak, and that

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the Norwegian PT boat be assigned to Admiral Western Coast for operations against enemy PT boats. The captured enemy craft are particularly suited for the execution of these tasks.

Thus an assignment to Group North/Fleet will take place only if there are concrete plans for operations. Group North/Fleet then can expect the assignment of these craft. As regards the assignment of the captured two-man submarine the Naval Staff has agreed in principal.

Submarine Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has been asked to take all further measures connected with the assignment of the submarine to Group North/Fleet.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Several craft were sighted southeast of Seiskari and shelled by the battery "Bismark". Ineffective fire was returned from Seiskari.

An enemy formation including one large ship was detected by radio location east of Tuetters between 2032 and 2239; the unit was subjected to mapfire. Two PT boats were picked up by searchlights for a short time at 2106.

2. Own Situation:

A Danish fishing vessel from Sweden with a crew of five men was taken over by one of our patrol boats and towed in to Copenhagen.

One mine was cleared by a minesweeping plane northwest of Anholt.

Two mines were cleared off Gdynia.

The 34th Italian smoke company formerly employed in Memel and Pillau is being transferred to Swinemunde.

Due to unfavorable weather conditions the small coastal minelaying craft broke off the operation "Zander II".

Two ELM mines were cleared by a minesweeping plane northeast of Kalbada Ground.

The SS Panzer Rifle Division Nordland and the 3rd SS Panzer Corps is on the way to reinforce the Oranienbaum front.

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With reference to the instructions for the operation of fleet units during the winter of 1943/44, Naval Command, East reports that the demand for adequate fouling with mines and reinforcement of the declared area in the Skagerrak has once more come to the forefront.

The Group suggests that in view of the limited number of mines available no further reinforcement of the West Wall, except for the minefields 16 E and F should be carried out, and that other mine material be made available for the mining of the Skagerrak. The minefields XX - XXIV which were approved in the main are to be laid out with anti-sweeping devices. In addition to this, shallow minefields against flat-bottomed craft are considered necessary.

This suggestion is in accordance with the plans of Operations Division, Naval Staff. It is, however, doubtful whether the supply of mines will be sufficient even for these limited tasks.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Submarine U "843" sighted a destroyer in BE 8817. Submarine U "262" reported an air attack from BF 7762 at 2140.

After carrying out an Aphrodite operation successfully submarine U "68" sank an escorted freighter of 7,500 BRT in ET 6643 (Freetown area) on 30 Nov.

An operation is planned against the westbound convoy in the area of AL, left border, for 5 or 6 Dec. In addition to this air reconnaissance will be carried out by, unfortunately, only 2 Ju 290's between 58 degrees and 52 degrees North and east of 21 degrees West. Sixteen submarines forming Group "Colonel" will patrol the line from AL 1982 to 7195 on 5 Dec. at 1200. It remains to be seen whether our weak air reconnaissance forces will be able to detect the convoy.

No further air reconnaissance was carried out for the south-bound convoy in the area of Group "Weddigen". This is the third convoy which has not been detected. It must be presumed that all three convoys proceeded very much farther west. Group "Weddigen" is proceeding to the southern border of Group "Colonel".

The submarines were informed that Columbia entered the war against Germany on 27 Nov.

VI. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

No special reports on our own operations are to hand.

By day the enemy carried out attacks in northern and western France. Machine-gun attacks were directed against the area Isigny -Guernsey, while fighter bomber attacked the building site of the Organization Todt at Valognes. At noon 100 Fortresses carried out attacks in the area Toulon -Marseille, while 46 Fortresses attacked the harbor and the submarine bunkers at Marseille. The heavy battery at Cape Yanet was hit, as also the submarine bunker, though the damage was only slight according to a report from the Organization Todt. Considerable damage was caused to the jetty walls and sheet pilings. Two dredgers and building materials were destroyed. Twenty two of our own fighters went up in defense. No reports yet received on number of planes shot down.

2. German Reich Territory:

During the evening between 1820 and 2350, about 400-500 planes penetrated into the area of Greater Berlin via Holland. Single planes flew as far as Leipzig and Dresden. At the same time eight to ten Mosquitos carried out a diversionary attack in the Rhenish-Westfalian industrial area, and five Mosquitos attacked the area Aachen-St. Vith. The attack on Berlin was an erratic one, covering the whole city area without any point of concentration. For damage see Daily Situation. A report on the number of enemy planes destroyed has not yet come in.

3. Mediterranean:

By day our air force carried out mainly reconnaissance flights. During the night 105 Ju 88's carried out a surprise attack on the port of Bari with great success. The town was still lighted when the planes approached. One tanker, one ammunition steamer and two merchantment were sunk; two of our planes failed to return to base.

Particularly strong enemy bomber and fighter-bomber activity was directed against our battery positions. According to reports from our anti-aircraft artillery nine enemy planes were shot down.

At noon 36 Liberators with fighter protection attacked Bolzano. One Liberator and two Lightnings were shot down.

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In the course of an attack against an ordnance collecting point south of Ancona one Kittyhawk was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery.

Twenty six single-engined and 18 twin-engined planes were counted on five airfields on Cyprus.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group, West:

Enemy Situation:

Eight LCT boats of the latest type put in to Gibraltar on 1 Dec. at 1145 from the Mediterranean. On 2 Dec. at 0930 Europa Point reported a convoy consisting of 55 freighters, 8 tankers, 6 U. S. destroyers and 2 corvettes sailing on an easterly course. Two destroyers, 4 corvettes, 2 motor minesweepers and 1 tug left Gibraltar heading east.

Own Situation:

For enemy air radis in the area Toulon - Marseille see Aerial Warfare. Otherwise nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

The eastbound convoy consisting of 30 ships escorted by five destroyers reported 50 miles east-northeast of Algiers on 1 Dec. at 1735, was picked up again at 0700 on 2 Dec. and then consisted of 38 freighters and six destroyers sailing 15 miles north of Jijelli. Thirty-five merchantmen were sailing 18 miles southwest of Gaeta in a southerly direction on 1 Dec. at 2015. This convoy and the southbound unit detected off Stromboli on 30 Nov. were not sighted again on 2 Dec.

On 1 Dec. Gaeta Bay was shelled by three destroyers, who withdrew when the fire was returned by our batteries.

Reconnaissance in the area around Sardinia -Corsica and along the west coast of Italy produced no results.

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Own Situation:

During the night of 1 Dec. the Piombino Strait was patrolled for the first time by a task force of naval landing craft.

Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean intends to have submarine U "593" sail along the west coast of Sardinia in a southerly direction to the operational area of Bourgie-Bone; later the boat will operate in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Submarine U "73" will operate in the area Alboran - Oran. Boat boats will leave Toulon on 2 Dec.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Two destroyers was proceeding north of Barletta on northwesterly course. According to photographic reconnaissance four landing craft, 116,000 BRT of merchant shipping and twelve medium and smaller naval vessels were lying in Bari.

At 0935 four Spitfires attacked the town area of Bar with bombs. Considerable damage was caused to ammunition dumps.

Own Situation:

An operation for the mopping-up of the Po Delta on 1 Dec. was unsuccessful.

The Chief of the 11th Coast Patrol Flotilla intends to leave Pola on 3 Dec. aboard the torpedo boat TA "21" for the execution of the island operation. Torpedo boat TA "20" is to follow on 4 Dec. Group South reports as follows regarding this operation:

1. After the completion of mopping-up operations on the islands off Zara, the 2nd Armoured Army Command in conjunction with Admiral, Adriatic Sea, and the air Force will commence operations under the cover name "Delfin" to clear the Dalmatian coastal route and mop up the enemy bases on the Dalmatian coast. Sequence: Solta, Brac, Hvar, Curzola, Mljet, Lagosta, Lissa. Original deadline" 1 Dec. The attack on Solta has been postponed from 3rd to 4th December.

2. For this operation Admiral, Adriatic Sea will have to employ all escort vessels ready to proceed and those becoming ready to proceed and those becoming ready to proceed under command of the Chief of the 11th Coast Patrol Flotilla.

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3. I immediately ready for action: Two Siebel ferries, three infantry landing craft, one harbor defense boat, anti-aircraft gun carrier NIOBE.

Ready for action on 2 Dec.: TRIESTE.

Ready for action on 3 Dec.: Three converted fishing smacks. In addition to this during the next few days three harbor defense boats, as well as the torpedo boats TA "21" on 3 Dec., TA "20" on 7 Dec.; if necessary, the small gun boat VIGILANTE can also be employed.

Armament of the anti-aircraft gun carrier NIOBE (formerly cruiser CATTARO) is as follows: six 8.35 cm anti-aircraft guns, four 4.7 cm. four 2 cm Oerlicons, two 1.32 cm Breda twin mountings, four heavy machine guns, ten light machine guns.

The Commanding Admiral, Adriatic Sea arrived in Split; he intends to go to Metkovic by boat.

With regard to the bauxite traffice Naval Staff reports to Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy), to the Naval Liaison Officer, High Command, General Staff and to the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff (Navy), that on 30 Nov. no essential change had taken place compared with the status of 23 Nov. For the time being shipping is possible from the north as far as Split. Only the smallest volume of traffic in light coastal landing craft plies between Dubrovnik and the South.

Strong enemy air activity combined with attacks on ships and harbor installations continues. Patrol activity on the part enemy destroyers south of Dubrovnik by night is to be expected. (See Telegram 1707).

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Radio monitoring intercepted numerous reconnaissance reports from planes on movements of small ships in the Dodecanese.

One auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by a submarine 8 miles south of Levitha at 0610.

Own Situation:

The hospital ship GRADISCA anchored in Porto Lago at 1420.

The Combat Team Mueller reports a quiet day and continuation of mopping-up operations on the islands.

c. Black Sea:Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring two PT boats were sailing off the east coast. Five submarines were located in the northwest Black Sea; one submarine was located at sea, position unknown.

Own Situation:

Motor minesweepers and naval landing craft operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch during the night of 1 Dec. did not make contact with the enemy. Though the visibility was good no supply traffic was observed. During the night of 2 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch will be manned by three naval landing craft, three motor minesweepers and two PT boats.

At 0735 the towed convoy Odessa - Sevastopol was unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine northwest of Cape Tarchankutsk. A naval landing craft belonging to the same convoy was destroyed 15 miles west of Cape Eupatoria by an explosion at 1445. No torpedo track was sighted. Mine control is under way.

Our patrol forces were repeatedly bombed and machine-gunned. Motor minesweepers were attacked by ground attack planes. Our fighter protection shot down nine enemy planes in the Feodosia area.

PT boat S "49" left Constanta during the evening, heading for Ivanbaba. With regard to the land situation, Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army Group A reports that the enemy attacked the western corner of the penetration area on the Perekop front in the evening hours of 1 Dec., in the course of which a slight penetration was achieved. A counter-attack supported by assault guns and the last of our reserves from the Armjansk area has been in progress since the early morning of 2 Dec. A new Russian division has been brought into the Bakchi area. The supply of Eltigen by air continues. A new attack is expected in the Kerch area.

Group South reports its intention to resume the employment of the CB boats in the Black Sea manned by German personnel, as also the CB boat now on the way from Linz.

Admiral, Black Sea has been instructed to allocate this boat to the 30th Submarine Flotilla and to lay emphasis on the construction of German CB boats where the Rumanians are concerned, as well as to take good care that the Rumanians do not take liberties. (See Telegram 2146).

According to a report from Admiral, Black Sea, stating that the no. of naval landing craft based on Kamysch Burun sank 10 to 2

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craft as the result of enemy action, the bringing up of further naval landing craft for patrol duty in the Straits of Kerch has become necessary. The fact that seaborne supply traffic to the Eltigen beachhead could be practically halted by naval forces justifies this operation. It must, however, be taken into consideration, that every naval landing craft lost represents a decrease in transport space needed for other tasks. The Naval Staff informed the High Command, Army General Staff Operations Detachment of this consideration and asked them to investigate whether it would not be possible to eliminate the Eltigen beachhead from the land so as to reduce the demands on the naval patrol service and preserve the vessels still available, since the tasks of PT boats and motor minesweepers are not inter-changeable with those of naval landing craft.

For copy of the teletype of I/skl I a 40742/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV. a.

Group South submitted a copy of correspondence with Air Force Command, Southeast on air force minelaying operations in the Bosphorus and in the Dardanelles for information. A copy is to be found in the records of IE.

It is satisfactory to note that as a result of the Naval Staff's representations to Air Force Operations Staff, Air Force Command, Southeast has changed its former attitude towards this minelaying operation. The Naval Staff has no comment to make on the tactical details contained in the report of the discussion and the attitude taken by Group South.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Army Situation:

The situation in the area Smolemsk-Minsk is very critical. Our forces are completely exhausted after the fourth day of the great defensive battle.

Otherwise no reports or decisions worth mentioning.

Special Items.

I. The Army Liaison Officer, attached to the Naval Staff informed the Operations Division, Army General Staff of the decision of the Chief of Naval Staff, according to which no forces are to be withdrawn from the Crimea. Only the Bennecke staff with unimportant sub-personnel (former Naval Shore Command, Ukraine) will be transferred for the establishment of the Naval Shore Command Dodecanese.

II. Submarine Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff transmitted the following decision taken by Chief, Naval Staff regarding Italian submarine crews (see War Diary 2 Dec.) to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean, Group West, German Naval Command, Italy and Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West:

"I. The Commander in Chief, Navy decided some time ago that the submarines captured in the Mediterranean were to be manned by Italians; this decision has been temporarily suspended on account of events in the Black Sea. Further instructions will follow as soon as possible.

2. Group West is requested to pass information to Lt. Commander Becker in Bordeaux.

3. Delay in the commissioning of Italian submarines must be expected.

4. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines must be prepared to man, or partly man, urgently needed transports with German personnel, as the situation demands."

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III. The Naval Attache passed on for information to the Operations Division the following instructions from the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines:

"Contrary to previous plans the official handing over of the submarines MARCO POLO II and change of colours will not take place until the whole training program and dockyard works are completed, if possible in Kiel, as a ceremonial handing over in the presence of the Japanese Naval Attache, and possibly also Admiral Abe, is important for both military and political reasons."

IV. In accordance with decision of the Chief of the Naval Staff regarding Italian midget submarines in the Black Sea (see War Diary 2 Dec.) the Naval Staff transmitted following to the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command and to Group South for information:

"1. The submarines which the Italian crews turned over to Rumania are of no value to the German Navy, as they are badly worn.

2. Further submarines of the same type are about to be completed in the Italian dockyards. The intention to transfer the boats to the Black Sea and to commission them with German crews still holds good. It will be necessary to use the workshop installations and spare parts depot in the Italian base of Constanta, in order to commission them.

3. Thus the Rumanians will have to be induced to hand over Italian base installations to the German Navy. The Rumanians might be permitted to share them.

4. In view of the Commander in Chief, Navy, the Italian crews are guilty of having broken their word which is equal to perjury. The Rumanians must therefore be asked to hand them over for courtmartial."

Situation 3 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

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II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Fifty nine planes were located operating over the Bay of Biscay. One British vessel was detected in each of the following.

at 1314 in AL 6930

at 1652 in BE 2160

at 2017 in BE 2786.

Our air reconnaissance sighted six small ships and one vessel, probably a minesweeper southeast of Plymouth at 1520.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Five submarines were escorted in, two submarines were escorted out. Otherwise nothing special to report.

Channel Coast:

No special events took place by day. The following operations are planned for the night of 3 Dec.:

Minelaying operation N 7 by six torpedo boats; torpedo operation by the 5th PT Boat Flotilla comprising nine boats against eastbound convoy in Lyme Bay; transfer of the steamer OSTFRIESLAND escorted by three motor minesweeper flotillas from Le Havre to Flushing.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The patrol, minesweeping and clearance activity was carried out by strong forces of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North.

The head of the Naval Salvage and Sea Rescue Command, as well as the captain and 2 officers of the WEISSENBURG and two soldiers were probably drowned while attempting to reach the wreck of the WEISSENBURG in a rubber dinghy.

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At 1600 the convoy left Borkum roadstead for the Hook.

About 38,000 BRT of shipping were escorted in Zeeland Waters and in the Zuider Zee.

Strong bomber formations crossing over Holland on the night of 2 Dec. were fired on by naval anti-aircraft artillery. Two planes were reported to have been shot down.

Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North reports:

38 ELM/A,

12 ELM/J,

67 ELM

altogether 117 ground mines, were cleared in November 1943. Seven enemy planes were shot down in the course of five enemy air raids, including one large-scale attack. Five enemy PT boats were sunk in the course of two PT boat fights.

One patrol boat was destroyed during a storm, the tanker WEISSENBURG was destroyed by aerial torpedo.

Two hundred and forty seven ships totalling 488,644 BRT were escorted in the area of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North, including 28 ships totalling 85,982 BRT, and a floating crane in Dutch convoys; furthermore 14 short convoys for warships including seven submarines and 46 short convoys for supply ships were carried out.

On 1 Dec. Naval Command, North submitted a plan for ground mine protection against enemy landings after a renewed examination of the matter and in accordance with instructions issued by Naval Staff on 11 Nov. This plan embraces 12 minefields, the most northern of which lies off Zandijk and the most southern off the western Scheldt.

These minefields are to be laid partly by craft available in the command of Admiral Netherlands, partly by escort vessels of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North, in accordance with instructions from Naval Command, North.

Naval Command, North has not insisted on the provision of naval landing craft for this purpose as previously requested.

The Naval Staff consented in principle to this plan.

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2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Seven planes were located operating over the central and northern North Sea. In the afternoon an LCT flotilla was observed to be in the Granton area by radio intelligence.

On 1st and 2nd Dec. slight artillery activity in the Petsamo area. Weak enemy forces penetrated into the Vardoe - Kirkenes - Petsamo area on both days. Eight bombs were dropped without causing any damage.

At 1452 our air reconnaissance reported a destroyer in AE 3658 on course of 190 degrees. Three smaller single freighters were sailing in the sea area southeast of the Faeroes of various courses between 1100 and 1250. One motor cutter under sail was reported 90 miles northwest of the Shetlands on northwest course at 1416.

Own Situation:

After running aground in the snowstorm off Nordtranstaer at 0750 the mine transportship OTTER sustained rudder damage. The ship is being towed in.

Forty nine ships were escorted to the north and 30 ships to the south. Sixteen ships remained stopped in harbor.

The submarines will proceed to a new patrol line from AC 1755 to 4435 on a course of 70 degrees at 2200.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

No special events were reported from the area of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic.

The clearance of the area southwest of Vaindlo in the command of Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic was begun. One explosive float was cleared. One mine was cleared by a minesweeping plane west of Kaunisari. The Finns have intensified the

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minelaying activity in the area Salta I with five PT boats.

V. Submarine Warfare.

No special reports are to hand from the Atlantic area.

The submarine U "178" left Penang on passage for operations area off Madras.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day only slight enemy air activity over the western area. In the night several planes approached the coasts of Holland and France.

2. German Reich Territory"

By day altogether four reconnaissance planes were reported in southwest German and in the area Stendal- Luenenburg. During the night of 3 Dec. Leipzig was subjected to a heavy air raid carried out by strong bomber formations. Considerable damage was caused. For details see Daily Situation. Individual reports have not yet been received.

With regard to the attack on Berlin during the night of 2 Dec. it is reported that 170 night fighters which took off in defense shot down 50 enemy planes, while the destruction of seven further planes is probable. Four of our planes failed to return to their bases. Our anti-aircraft artillery shot down seven further enemy planes. Most of the bombs dropped in this attack fell in the southern border areas, particularly in the districts of Zossen and Teltow. The General Staff of the German Air Force supposes that this was due to defective navigation owing to wind deviation. During the approach the wind shifted from south to north.

3. Mediterranean Area:

Our air force was mainly engaged on reconnaissance.

By day the enemy attacked the airfields of Viterbo and

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Marcigliani with strong formations. On the latter seven Me 109's were slightly damaged. Four reconnaissance planes were reported in the Aegean Sea, while seven planes were reported supplying partisans in the Greek area during the night of 3 Dec.

4. Eastern Front:

5th Air Force ordered 46 planes into action. For results of the reconnaissance see Enemy Situation, Northern Waters.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group, West:

Enemy Situation:

One large fully laden transports as well as two freighters escorted by a destroyer and two corvettes, probably from the Atlantic put in to Gibraltar on 2 Dec. at 0145. The convoy reported off Europa Point on 2 Dec. at 0930 was again detected by our air reconnaissance 30 miles northwest of Cape Tres Forcas in the afternoon, and in the strength of 70 ships northwest of Oran on 3 Dec. at 0755.

A westbound convoy consisting of about 22 ships was sailing 15 miles north of Tres Forcas on 2 Dec. at 1500.

A convoy consisting of 13 freighters, two transports escorted by an auxiliary cruiser and three gun boats left for the Atlantic on 3 Dec. at 0745. A cruiser of the CAIRO class coming from the Mediterranean put in to Gibraltar at 0930.

Own Situation:

Six steamers amounting to 22,185 BRT were escorted in four convoys off the south coast of France.

The completion of the submarine bunker in Marseille will be delayed by 3-4 weeks as a result of the air raid on 2 Dec.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

The forenoon reconnaissance carried out in the sea area Sardinia -Corsica was incomplete. No sighting reports

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from this area as well as from the sea area of Sicily and the Apulian harbors are to hand. Twenty three merchantmen and one destroyer were sighted 15 miles south of Naples at 2010, while ten landing craft sailing on a course of 60 degrees were sighted 52 miles south-southwest of Salerno at 2120. A submarine was detected six miles east of Genoa at 0530.

During the night of 3 Dec. two destroyers and six PT boats were patrolling off Recananti, Civitanova and Benedetto. The harbor and motor road were shelled from the sea. The bombarding vessels withdrew when our batteries returned the fire.

Own Situation:

The continuous attacks of enemy fighter bombers on the harbors in the south as well as on harbors on the west and east coasts did not cause any casualties on 2 Dec.

On request Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean repeated the report made on 22 Nov. regarding submarine operations.

1. Few results have been achieved lately in the operations area between Sicily and Naples. Two submarines are at present operating.

2. In addition to other factors, it is essential that the submarine commander becomes familiar with certain sea areas.

3. In view of the present strong air activity Commander, Submarines considers that operation of submarines under the cover of the African coast would be very promising. The Air Force only occasionally attacks the large convoys, but does not attack the traffic which is running all the time and is particularly remunerative for submarines. Cooperation with the air force would be advantageous.

4. The operation of one submarine on the north African coast and one in the Tyrrhenian Sea with commanders who are familiar with these areas will, after a suitable period has elapsed, give some idea as to where the next boats becoming ready for action can be employed.

After the disbanding of Army Group B and the subordination of the Army High Command 14 to Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southwest, the Naval Staff considers that the Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army High Command 14 can be recalled.

The German Naval Command, Italy has been asked for an opinion with regard to this proposal.

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3. Area of Naval Group, South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reports a submerged submarine in the channel off Zara, no time stated.

Own Situation:

The anti-aircraft cruiser NIOBE and the torpedo boats TA "21" and NA "4" are scheduled to leave Pola for Trogir on the morning of 3 Dec. No report of their departure has yet come in.

The Coastal (Defense) Patrol Flotilla, Northern Adriatic Sea was dissolved on 2 Dec., and the 11th Coast Patrol Flotilla was forced. With regard to the combined operation "Delfin": Admiral Adriatic has asked Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean to see whether submarines can be spared for a short operation, as the task is not only strategically important in connection with the supply situation on the coast of East Africa, but also promises success against enemy shipping.

Admiral, Adriatic has also given orders for the Siebel ferries to be overhauled for this operation stating that the operation can commence on 15 Dec. In addition it is planned to operate the torpedo boats MISSOURI and AUDACE.

The bringing up of anti-aircraft artillery for the harbors and dockyards on the Adriatic Sea as requested by Group South on 30 Dec. was discussed by the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division and the Air Force, Operations Staff. For the time being no forces apart from those anti-aircraft forces already in the area of Air Force Command, Southeast can be brought up. Details are to be settled by Admiral, Adriatic and Air Force Command, Southeast.

A short report from submarine U "453" regarding the execution of the 2nd minelaying task on the Brindisi roadstead shows that the execution of the task had to be broken off after the twelfth mine as the boat was disturbed by a destroyer. She fired a Zaunkoenig torpedo which was a ground runner. Systematic control off the harbors has been greatly intensified. The number of enemy destroyers and patrol boats employed has increased.

b. Aegean Sea:

No situation reports from Admiral, Aegean Sea have come in.

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c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 2150 air reconnaissance sighted two coastal vessels and three PT boats proceeding 25 miles northwest of Tuapse in a northerly direction. At about the same time a surfaced submarine was attacked by tow of our own submarine chasers 60 miles west of Eupatoria at 2209.

Own Situation:

Naval landing craft "566" was torpedoed by a submarine 15 miles west of Eupatoria on the afternoon of 2 Dec. The craft did not sink. Aboard the craft were three assault guns and one armored scout car.

On 2 Dec. heavy enemy air attacks with bombs and machine-guns were directed against Kamysh Burun without casualties being caused. Naval landing craft, motor minesweepers and PT boats on patrol in the Straits of Kerch during the night of 2 Dec. did not sight any enemy objectives. At 0300 the beachhead was subjected to fire from PT boats and motor minesweepers. During the night of 3 Dec. the 1st PT Boat Flotilla consisting of five boats will patrol off Eltigen while three naval landing craft will operate off Kamysh Burun.

The submarine U "19" put in to Constanta from enemy patrol at noon on 2 Dec., PT boat S "49" arrived at Ivanbaba on 3 Dec.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The rumors of a meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in Teheran have been confirmed. No communique has yet been issued.

Mihailovik has denied all allegations accusing him of making agreements with the Germans or with Tito. As a matter of fact the agreements reached at different times between Cetniks and German forces were exclusively agreements with subordinate leaders.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Chief of Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff reports on the new organization within the High Command, Navy for the task of carrying out scientific research on radio location as ordered by the Commander in Chief, Navy. Details as to the organization and the personalities to be engaged in the research are not yet complete.

II. Army Situation: In the area of the 4th Panzer Army Corp the enemy broke through our main line of resistance which had been partly rolled up. The forth day of the great battle raging in the Smolensk - Minskarea has gone comparatively favorably. In the general situation remains unchanged. In this sector the deterioration of the weather has given some relief.

Otherwise no reports or decisions worth mentioning.

Special Items:

I. Before the data on supply possibilities in the south-eastern area as requested by Group South and the German Naval Command, Italy is available, the Chief, Shipping and Transport Branch reported on his own viewpoint to the Chief, Quartermaster Division and the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff; he is of the opinion that as many small ships as possible must be made available as quickly as possible. But that, whatever the shipping space, supply will depend entirely on defensive patrol in this area.

Copy as per 1/Skl 40995/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. IX.

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II. Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports on the monthly summary of enemy merchant shipping losses during the month of November 1943.

Altogether 42 ships totalling 180,166 BRT

were lost during that month.

of these 13 ships totalling 55,943 BRT

can be ascribed to the success of our submarines.

Copy as per 1/Skl 50693/43 geh. see War Diary, Part D, Vol.: Enemy shipping losses.

III. On 25 Nov. the Chief, Armed Forces High Command issued orders for the appointment of a commander of German troops in Transnistria.

Copy as per 1/Skl 41083 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

IV. On the grounds of a report issued by the Minelaying Experimental Command concerning the discovery of a new British mine of very sensitive magnetism and acoustics (designation ELM/I a 5) Operations Division, Naval Staff has issued a directive to the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Bureau of Naval Armament, Underwater Obstacles Branch, dated 1 Dec. on noise box - equipment of all ships for protection against ELM/ I a 5:

The British ground mine ELM/I a 5 has a very sensitive inductive-acoustic combined detonator, in which both influences are tuned to each other according to strength and period of time. As far as can be seen at present, it is unlikely that the mine can be swept by any available means; however, the immunization of the detonator and therewith the protection of the ship can be achieved by a noise box fixed on the ship, or carried 100 m in front of the escorted vessel.

Thus it is absolutely necessary to equip all ships with a noise box as a means of self-defense. It is true that those ships with noise boxes on the bow will still be endangered by blunt acoustic mines (ELMA/st V15); however, this danger is not so great, as these mines can be cleared by sweeping the routes beforehand, or by the convoy itself.

The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been asked to issue directions for

- I. equipment of warships and merchantmen with noise boxes.
2. Fixing of suitable devices that will make it possible to use noise boxes on all vessels.

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3. Operation of noise boxes by anti-aircraft personnel aboard ships or by balloon crews.

The Bureau of Underwater Obstacles Branch, Naval Armament has been asked:

1. To step up the production of noise boxes, in order to secure the final and permanent equipment of all ships with noise boxes as soon as possible, and in as many sea areas as possible.

2. To organize the repair of the used noise box "heads" and the supply of new noise boxes in ports by the Mining and Barrage Inspectorate.

It was emphasized that the matter is particularly urgent.

V. The report of the Naval Building Director Oelfken, who conceived the original ideas for the new submarines types XXI and XXIII, on the progress of the work in the emergency plant at Blakenburg was submitted to the Commander in Chief, Navy on 30 Nov. by the Chairman of Ships Construction Commission.

For copy as per R. Min.f.Ruest.u.Kriegsprod. Schiffbaukommission B.Nr 2321/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

VI. With reference to the Fuehrer directive 51 and the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff sent the following additional order dated 30 Nov. to Groups North and West, to Naval Commands East and North, to the Commanding Admirals in Holland and Denmark, as well as to Naval Command, Norway:

a. The Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff will direct the transfer of alarm units in the home area war zone of the Naval Commands East and North to the assembly points fixed by Group West, Admiral, Netherlands and Admiral, Denmark respectively.

b. A special teletype formular will be envolved for the instigation of the measures.

c. The direction of the alarm unit operations in Norway is left to the Naval Command, Norway acting in conjunction with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway.

For copy of the order as per Skl Qu AII Mob 3535 Gkdos. Chefs see the records of 1/Skl I op.

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Situation 4 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty nine planes were located operating over the Bay of Biscay. One British vessel was located at 1602 in CF 5310.

And another at 2025 in AL 6380.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Three boats of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla put in to Brest at 1000. Six boats of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla left the Royan Roadstead at 0630 for attack trials in the inner Bay of Biscay. The boats are scheduled to return on the morning of 5 Feb.

Four submarines were escorted in.

Channel Coast:

The CONDOR, MOEWE, and FALKE put in to Cherbourg at 0430.

The OSTFIESLAND was delayed by 24 hours because of faulty D.G. Equipment.

The patrol positions in the Channel were not occupied on account of fog.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The westbound convoy "470" put in to Den Helder at 0600. The continuation of the journey was postponed until 5 Dec. on account of fog. The Ems-Elbe traffic as well as minesweeping in the Heligoland Bight did not take place on account of fog. In the course of the day single enemy planes were reported over the Dutch coast.

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Five convoys totalling 30,000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Zee and in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Nine planes were located operating over the northern Sea and in the area of the Shetland - Faeroe Islands. Fourteen planes penetrated into each of the areas Petsamo and Kirkenes on 2 and 3 Dec. It is reported that airfields were bombed. One single reconnaissance plane was sighted over Stavanger and Bergen.

No results were achieved by our air reconnaissance in Northern Waters.

Own Situation:

At 1500 the minelayers OSTMARK, BRUMMER and ELSASS and the destroyers Z"31", RIEDEL and LODY left Kristiansand South to carry out minelaying task.

Group Command, North Fleet ordered the Naval Task Force to 6 hours' notice as from 1800.

Twenty five ships were escorted to the north and 27 ships to the south. Twenty four ships remained in port owing to the lack of escort vessels.

Naval Command, Norway reports that Commanding Admiral, Cruisers was warned of the danger of massing ships in Alta Fjord after berth for the MONTE ROSA was shifted southeast of the Tirpitz cage.

IV. Skagerrak; Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

One ground mine was cleared northeast of Hans-tholm.

Otherwise no special reports from the areas of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic, Commander, Minelayers, Baltic and Admiral, Baltic Countries.

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The convoy and security service was carried out according to plan and without any disturbances in the whole Baltic Sea area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

In the North Atlantic our air reconnaissance in the area west of Group "Coronel" achieved no result. According to radio locations taken on individual British planes it is presumed that the awaited southbound convoy is sailing south of the Great Circle. Thus Group "Coronel" has been ordered to occupy the patrol line from AK 6883 to AL 7781 as from 1800 on 5 Dec. Group "Weddigen" which was ordered quickly into this area from the south will occupy the reconnaissance line from BD 3946 to BE 4015 on a course of 340 degrees at 1800 on 6 Dec.

No special reports from the Indian Ocean.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day a strong enemy bomber formation entered the Dutch area, and attacked an airfield. In addition to this, seven Do 217's were destroyed in the course of an attack on two Do 217 squadrons engaged in training.

2. German Reich Territory:

Ten enemy planes attacked Duisburg during the evening, achieving little effect. During the night of 4 Dec. ten planes approached the Heligoland Bight between Amrum and Terschelling, probably to lay mines.

In the attack on Leipzig on 3 Dec. the enemy first dropped mrrking cascades over Hanover and Berlin. The first and second waves approached Berlin first and then turned away to Leipzig. The third wave made straight for Leipzig from Hanover and were the first in to attack. The enemy picked out the center of the city with great accuracy, which was an excellent piece of navigation considering the misty to foggy weather which enveloped the whole Reich territory to an altiture of 500 meters. Six hundred large and medium fires which are still raging, were reported from Leipzig; altogether 80 industrial areas were hit. Six hundred houses were destroyed, 500 hourse were heavily damaged. The number of the dead is reported to be 100, while 450 persons were wounded and 100,000 persons lost their homes. One hundred of our own night fighters which were ordered into action shot down 28 of the attacking planes, while two of our own planes failed to return.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

In the course of our attack on Bari during the night of 2 Dec. four ships totalling 31,000 BRT were sunk, ten ships totalling 51,000 BRT were heavily damaged.

Otherwise no special reports from either enemy or allied sources.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report received from Ceuta ten LCT's of a new type coming from the Mediterranean put into Gibraltar at 1000 on 3 Dec. Eight freighters most of them laden and twelve LST's on deck coming from the Mediterranean passed Gibraltar making for the Atlantic at 1030. In addition to this five freighters were sighted heading for Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

The delay in the completion of the submarine bunker as a consequence of the air raid on Marseille is estimated at eight weeks.

A steamer was escorted off the south coast of France.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

The large convoy reported northeast of Oran on 3 Dec. was not detected again. Lively single traffic of warships and merchantmen in both directions was sighted off the west coast of south Italy on 3 Dec. Our air reconnaissance on the morning of 4 Dec. in the Tyrrhenian Sea and south Adriatic Sea achieved no results.

On 4 Dec. at 1000 one submarine was hunted 14 miles west of La Spezia without success.

Own Situation:

Three auxiliary sailing vessels were sunk by enemy naval forces between Ancona and Benedetto. Two others were missing. For the time being traffic is prohibited south of Ancona.

The enemy destroyers south of Ancona during the night of 2 Dec. were forced to withdraw under effective fire from the 9th Naval Artillery Detachment 632 after radar location. Five British prisoners of war and four Italians with radio gear were captured during mopping-up operations in the Po Delta.

The execution of the minelaying task "Wiesel" northwest of Elba by the torpedo boat TA "24" and three minesweepers was broken off on account of unfavorable weather conditions.

3. Area Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Group South reports that the mopping-up operations on the islands in the southern Adriatic will not start until 5 Feb. because of either failure or delay in getting the boats ready for operations, and in bringing up further naval forces.

During the night of 3 Dec. the anti-aircraft cruiser NIOBE anchored south of Zara and will proceed to Galera on 4 Dec. at 0600. At 0600 the torpedo boat TA "21" left Trogir for Zara. The torpedo boat TA "20" is scheduled to leave Trieste for Trogir at 0700.

The Commander of the Naval Shore Command, Dalmatia has transferred to Zara by order of Admiral, Adriatic.

The motor vessel GIOVANNINI laden with fuel was attacked by planes on about 2 Dec. east of Trogir, and is a total loss.

On the same day a convoy consisting of a Siebel ferry, one landing craft and two harbor defense boats sailing from Sibenik to Trogir was attacked by enemy fighters 15 miles west of Split. The Siebel ferry and a harbor defense boat were sunk. Enemy planes bombed Omis 12 miles east of Split. On 3 Dec. the torpedo boat TA "21" was attacked without result by six planes dropping 20 bombs 15 miles south of Sibenik.

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On the same day an auxiliary sailing vessel flying the Italian flag and under German Command was subjected to machine-gun fire from the isle of San Katharina in the Pasman Channel. The torpedo boat TA "21" returned the fire. For the time being the Pasman Channel cannot be used for navigation as it is threatened by 7.5 cm gun near Biograd.

b. Aegean Sea:

On 2 Dec. at 2000 a tug broke away from a convoy north of Skiathos and is missing. It is presumed that the tug entered the harbor of Salonica unnoticed by our forces. The search is being continued.

The remainder of the Combat Team Mueller is being transferred from Kos and Leros to Samos. The Combat Team Mueller intends to incorporate volunteers from three companies of black-shirts, who were captured in Nicaria, in the Black Shirts' Battalion on Samos in the course of the next few days.

At 2130 an enemy plane fouled the harbor of Syra with mines.

For short report by the "1st Submarine Chaser Flotilla" on the torpedoing of the steamer PALMA on the morning of 27 Nov. see Teletype 0955.

It is intended to start the mopping-up and control operations in the area of the Euboea Channel and on Petali using a landing company and coastal assault boats on 5 Dec.

Group South reports as follows in reply to the request made to the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command for Fuehrer information via Army Group F regarding the employment of coastal artillery in the Aegean.

I. Transferred to Leros:

a. Personnel of one battery (medium caliber) was withdrawn from a battery in progress of construction on Crete.

b. Personnel of two batteries (light caliber) and personnel of one battery (heavy anti-aircraft artillery) were withdrawn from the Gulf of Saronia; thus two light L. A. batteries comprising 200 men went out of action; about 50 soldiers were lost when the transport vessel was torpedoed.

2. Transferred to Stampalia:

Personnel of one battery (light caliber) from the Naval Artillery Detachment 609; a fresh request was made for 32 men for the occupation of the Dodecanese Islands:

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Personnel for two naval artillery detachments and one naval anti-aircraft detachment.

The High Command of the Navy approved the assigneent of personnel for one naval artillery detachment while personnel for the naval anti-aircraft detachment was refused, indicating the air force as the competant authoritiy. The Group considers the assignment of personnel for two naval artillery detachments for five medium and five light batteries urgently necessary; no further plans were being made.

The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division will take further action.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The convoy detected north of Taupse on the evening of 3 Dec. was bombed by our planes, One PT boat was probably heavily damaged.

Own Situation:

Two of our submarine chasers were unsuccessfully attacked with two torpedoes by an enemy submarine west of Eupatoria. After three depth charge attacks, damage to the submarine was confirmed.

The naval landing craft operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch reported nothing of interest during the night of 3 Dec.

At 0130 the 1st PT Boat Flotilla attacked two motor gunboats apparently engaged in reconnoitering the Straits of Kerch off Eltigen. The enemy returned whe fire with rocket projectors and 3.7 cm guns as he withdrew in a southeasterly direction. Throughout the night our PT boats were bombed repeatedly by enemy planes. Engine trouble and casualties were caused aboard the PT boat S "49". Only lively traffic in airborne supplies was observed in the beachhead area. During the night of 4 Dec. nine naval landing craft and three minesweepers will be operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch. A naval landing craft off Kamysh Burun was attacked by five enemy PT boats with torpedoes at 1840. The attackers withdrew after being shelled by artillery.

At 0920 the enemy carried out an air raid on Otchakov. Mines are suspected to have been dropped off Cherson.

Shipping traffic from Sevastopol to Balaklava has been stopped.

The submarine U "20" is returning from its operations area to Constanta.

As regards the land situation Admiral, Black Sea reports that our attack on

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the Eltigen beachhead advanced from the south as far as the Burun lighthouse. An attack from the west resulted in only a slight gain of ground. It is planned to continue the attack on the morning of 5 Dec.

Enemy attacks in the Bakchi beachhead, after very strong preliminary artillery fire employing 5 - 6 divisions and 25 tanks, were repulsed in front of our main line of resistance after heavy defensive fighting. This was a defensive success of the first order.

No fighting of any importance was reported from the northern front.

Continuous enemy reinforcements in the Sivash beachhead indicate an enemy attack is imminent.

According to an intercepted radiogram from Group South to Admiral, Black Sea, Group South expects that the enemy will launch a strong offensive against the Crimea, at the latest, after the commencement of the cold weather. The Group therefore transmitted advice on measures to be taken by Admiral, Black Sea, should evacuation of the personnel from the Crimea eventually become necessary. For copy as per 1/Skl 3538/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see records of 1/Skl op.

Investigations are being made to see whether the radio message is the reaction to the instructions of the Naval Staff regarding precautionary measures for the evacuation of the Crimea. If this proves correct the matter is to be investigated by the Naval Staff.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Naval Attache Tokyo transmits a report from the Japanese Naval Staff on the first, second and third aerial combats in the area of the Gilbert Islands on 19, 26 and 27 respectively.

For copy of the radio message as per 1/Skl 50824/43 geh. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

The comments of the German Naval Attache Section were not attached to the report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Washington has stated it is unlikely that a communique on the Teheran Conference will be issued.

Further news regarding the Cairo Conference points to intensified Allied operations against Japan.

A national committee for Yugoslavia has been established under the guidance of Tito. The members have not been drawn from specifically Communist circles. This obviously Russian move will only serve to increase the differences of opinion between the Anglo-Americans and the Russians.

Turks living in Greece have been called home.

As a consequence of sabotage activity in the university of Oslo 1,200 Norwegian students are to be shipped to camps in Germany. Armed Forces High Command has requested that the deportation be carried out as soon as possible.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Report of Naval Staff, Quartermaster General:

a. The 3rd Air Force has reinforced the anti-aircraft defense at Toulon. The four mobile naval batteries transferred to that area will remain there for the time being. The Navy is unable to approve the transfer of smoke-laying units from La Pallice to the airfield at Merignac, or only if it is a case of protecting the Ju 290's. It has been decided by Chief of Naval Staff that the latter is more important than the protection of La Pallice or the He 177's.

b. The Chief of Naval Staff requested information on the state of construction of the submarine bunkers at Marseille.

c. Commanding General, Armed Forces, West has revised the construction program to be carried out in the western area during the coming months. The Navy has been treated with the least consideration of all. The constructions already planned will have to be restricted. The quota is so small that it must be decided whether PT boat bunkers or submarine requirements are to take priority.

The Chief of Naval Staff has decided: Priority is to be given to the construction of submarine bunkers at Marseille; for the rest Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff will investigate on the basis of the increased losses.

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last year, how far the bunkers at present available will suffice. Group West will be advised that construction at Marseilles is to take first place; the other questions are to be submitted again for decision after thorough examination. The fact that PT boats are in less danger than submarines because of their size and short dockyard periods must be taken into account.

II. Report from the Chief of Naval Personnel Division:

The question of the promotion of soldiers killed in action in the western area which has been raised by the Commander in Chief, Navy, will be settled for the Navy in the same way as has already been done in the Army. The final text will be submitted shortly.

III. Report from the Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff:

According to an intelligence report, French officers stated in the course of a discussion with Spanish major that the Allies intend to make a landing in the area Sete - Narbonne. No deadline was mentioned.

A report from the Foreign Office states that the Anglo-Saxons do not intend a landing in the near future, but will wait another few months to see the effect of their air raids.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

IV. Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports on the result of the conference with Director General Merker on small ships in the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas. M is aware of the importance of quick construction. No naval landing craft are being built in the Aegean. Starting January about ten boats will be completed per month in the Black Sea.

Naval landing craft are also to be built in the Adriatic area, but the first boats will not be completed until February (six boats), later on ten boats will be completed monthly. It is hoped to improve on this still further.

The building of standard lighters is now under way; the first lighters will not be completed until June 1944.

The only craft becoming available at once are Siebel ferries; 40 are under construction and some of them already in action. Col. Siebel did not use the quota placed at his disposal for the speedy construction of ferries, but for the achievement of the highest possible number by producing only individual parts; thus he succeeded in extorting the further quotas which are now necessary. The 96 Siebel ferries will have to be completed.

V. Army Situation:

No essential changes in the overall situation:

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Special Items.

I. Submarine Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff transmitted the following decision to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, copy to Special Staff of the Navy attached to the Italian Staff of armament and War Production, German Naval Command, Italy and Group South:

"I. It has been decided that altogether only twelve CB-boats are to be completed, which will include three submarines in Pola and four in Galatz. Five boats are in the process of being transported to Galatz, while seven boats are on the building slip.

2. It has been decided not to use the five boats hitherto employed in the Black Sea, independent of the result of negotiations with the Rumanians, as the wear and tear on the boats has been too great.

3. The deliverly of spare parts to Galatz and Constanta respectively must be secured. The submarines are to be employed in the Black Sea only.

4. The boats are to be taken over by the 30th submarine Flotilla.

5. Six submarines will be operational and the remaining six boats will be kept in reserve."

II. Group North/Fleet submitted a proposal for the organization of operations of small unit commands. For copy as per 1/Skl 411321/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

Furthermore, Group North/Fleet has stated its attitude to the question of the organization and operation of the 10th PT Boat Flotilla (Italian). For copy as per 1/Skl 1131/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

Both questions will be dealt with in the course of a joint conference between the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff and the Bureau of Naval Administration on 10 Dec. with Chief of Staff, Group North/Fleet in the office of the Naval Staff.

Situation 5 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area:I. Enemy Situation:

Forty seven planes were located operating over the Bay of Biscay. At 2216 a British vessel was detected in DH 3350.

2. Own Situation:Atlantic Coast:

Exercises of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla proceeded as planned. The boats put in to the Gironde at 0900.

Nine thousand BRT were escorted off the Atlantic Coast, including one steamer laden with ore sailing from Bilbao to Bayonne. One mine was cleared off Brest.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 3 Dec. the tanker OSTFRIESLAND was escorted from Le Havre to Dunkirk. From 0337 to 0402 the convoy was subjected to long-range artillery fire. Accurate fire caused slight damage to the steamer and a few casualties. Small fires were extinguished. While entering the harbor the steamer was driven on to a hawserboom, causing the screw to foul up. The damage should be repaired by noon on 5 Dec. For a short report from Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West see Teletype 1445.

Thus three of the six eastbound convoys routed through the Straits of Dover were successful.

Otherwise nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

On the evening of 4 Dec. seven enemy planes penetrated into the area of the East Frisian Islands and into the Heligoland Area. After midnight on 5 Dec. three planes entered the area of Ameland and Norderney, probably to lay mines. Anti-aircraft artillery on Heligoland opened fire. An enemy reconnaissance plane was observed over Wesermuende in the morning. At noon the convoy "470" proceeded from Helder to the Hook. Two mines were cleared two miles west of Neuwerk.

About 14,000 BRT were escorted in five convoys in Zeeland Waters and in the Zuider Zee.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

On the morning of 4 Dec. two planes were sighted in the Vardoe area and one plane in the area of Kirkenes. Submarine warning was given in West Fjord in AF 3624 at noon on 4 Dec. The boats were fired on.

On 5 Dec. at 1625 two PT boats were sighted near Sariskjaer and chased to the west. Sound of engines was reported 80 miles east-southeast of Kristiansand South at 1400. At 1105 several explosions were heard in the same area. Radio location produced no results.

According to radio intelligence the 30th British PT Boat Flotilla is at sea in the Lerwick area.

According to air reconnaissance three small freighters and two sailing ships were lying in Kvalvig (Faeries). One freighter was proceeding northeast of the Faeroes on a course of 220 degrees.

Owing to incomplete observation the reconnaissance of the sea area around Jan Mayen as well as on course Banak - Bear Island - South Cape - Banak was without tactical result.

Own Situation:

After having carried out their minelaying task the OSTMARK, BRUMMER, ELSASS and LODY put in to Kristiansand South.

Twenty nine ships were escorted to the north and 48 ships to the south. Eight ships remained in harbor.

In agreement with the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff, Group North/Fleet has passed on the 5th Air Force Command's request that the Fighter Command, North Alta be disbanded during the winter months on the grounds that the present strength of the Fighter Command could not guarantee protection for the fleet in Alta Fjord against enemy bomber formations. Since the detachment of the II. company of the 5th Fighter Group, reinforcement of the Command is out of the question. In addition, the increasing darkness makes it impossible for the plane reporting service to detect the approaching enemy in time.

Considering the position evaluation transmitted by the 5th Air Force, Group North/Fleet feel it cannot demand the occupation of Alta by Fighter Command during the winter months; she expects, however, that it will be occupied again as soon as the daylight period offers favorable operating conditions. (See Teletype 1633).

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.I. Enemy Situation:

Own coastal sector in Kronstadt Bay was subjected to weak harassing fire; harassing fire from Seiskari was directed against the battery of Kolgambia in Luga Bay.

2. Own Situation:

The convoy service in the Baltic Sea Entrances was partly hindered by fog. An escort vessel ran aground in the Trave river owing to fog. Otherwise nothing to report.

The Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army Group B (Rear Admiral Ruge) reports:

"Field Marshal Rommel took up his new duties on 3 Dec. Up to the present the following naval measures have proved imperative.

1. Reinforcement of the defense of Esbjerg by immediate emplacement of 15 cm turrets and laying out of a regular minefield in the Graedyb.

2. Reinforcement of the defense of Limfjord by regular minefields and the early allotment of gun carriers.

3. Reinforcement of the Skagerrak defense by improving the anti-aircraft defense of the battery Hanstholm II and considerable reinforcement of the minefields in the Skagerrak declared area. Anti-sweeping devices with various demolition units are necessary, even in great depths.

It is known that most of these measures are already under way, but it is suggested that the Naval Staff presses for the greatest possible acceleration. Of general urgency: Greater steadiness in personnel economy, no further detachment of personnel. Allocation of heavy infantry weapons; the detachment of Army officers for close-combat training is being investigated by Army Group B. - Admiral Denmark will be kept informed.

Additional note for Operations Division, Naval Staff, only:

"The measures taken by the Navy and the good co-operation with the Army by all quarters have made a favorable impression."

V. Submarine Warfare.I. Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring the U.K. - Mediterranean

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convoy was probably sailing in the sea area 40 degrees - 42 degrees North, 17 degrees - 19 degrees West on the evening of 4 Dec.

2. Own Situation:

Air reconnaissance east of the patrol line of Group Coronel was without result. The assumption that awaited ONS convoy proceeded further to the north is confirmed by deciphering of radio messages directing stragglers from ONS 24 to AK 2356 and 6476 on 1 Dec. It is assumed that the enemy located our submarines in the area AL 70 and 40. At 1348 the straggler's route was shifted southward to AK 1893 and AJ 6841. The transfer of our patrol line to the south was carried out during the night of 4 Dec. According to further radio deciphering on 4 Dec. the eastbound convoy HX "268" was sailing in AK 4485 at 1000 on 15 Dec. A new operation is being worked out on the basis of this knowledge.

Group Coronel has been ordered to patrol the line from AL 1746 to 4827 as from 7 Dec. at 1800. Our planes will reconnoiter the area west of this line on 7 Dec.

No special reports from the Indian Ocean or rest of the Atlantic.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day lively enemy air activity over the western area. A strong formation dropped 40-50 high-explosives on the building site at Etaples. A very strong formation which penetrated into the area Rennes - Nantes - Lorient attacked railroads and individual localities. An airfield in the area of Breux was attacked. Six enemy planes were shot down by day; one H III was damaged.

During the night only single planes approached the coasts of Belgium, western and northern France.

2. German Reich Territory:

Three reconnaissance planes flew over northwestern Germany in the morning, No enemy planes entered German territory during the night.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Three enemy short-range reconnaissance planes were shot down in the fighting zone by our fighters in the course of free-lance fighting. One enemy plane was shot down over Rome. During the day the enemy carried out

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nuisance raids in the area of Civitavecchia. In the front area the enemy carried out medium attacks with fighter-bombers. In the afternoon 18 enemy planes carried out armed reconnaissance in the Mostar area. Six spitfires dropped bombs on a base north of Valona. Thirteen enemy planes were observed on reconnaissance in the Aegean, while four further planes reconnoitered the Gulf of Corinth.

During the night the enemy carried out nuisance raids in the area of Milan - Verona while six to eight planes attackd Salonica.

4. Eastern Front:

No special reports from the Black Sea:

For results of the reconnaissance carried out by the 5th Air Force see Enemy Situation, Northern Waters.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Three destroyers and one submarine left Gibraltar on 4 Dec. at 0930 heading for the Mediterranean. According to a report from Cape Spartel the convoys that left the Mediterranean on 3 Dec. have joined up.

On 5 Dec. a convoy with French and Moroccan soldiers left Casablanca in direction of the Mediterranean. One DIDO class cruiser put in to Gibraltar coming from unknown direction.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance a southbound convoy consisting of 20 freighters and five escort vessels was sailing 55 miles south of Crotona in southwesterly direction. Further reports are not available.

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Own Situation:

The Commander of the 7th PT Boat Flotilla put to sea with seven boats to carry out the minelaying operation "Ulan" off the west coast of Italy. Until now the submarine hunt between Elba -Piombino and search for enemy mines in the Piombino Strait has produced no result. According to fresh reports the auxiliary sailing vessels sank between Ancona and Benedetto on 4 Dec. were not sunk by surface forces but by air forces.

A further harbor defense boat was commissioned in Venice on 3 Dec.

According to a report from the German Naval Command, Italy, the following sea transport performances were achieved:

a. Supplies:

7,207 tons, 57 motor vehicles, 13 guns; large ships transported 1,910 tons, small ships 5,297 tons, losses 160 tons.

b. Return Stowage:

Of the 334,818 tons return stowage, 10,364 tons have been transported away by large ships and 8,990 tons by small ships, making 19,324 tons in all.

2,000 bales of cellular wool were lost in the course of an air raid on Civitavecchia.

c. Transferred to France:

Seven ships totalling 27,779 BRT, including 7,379 tons of return stowage ships.

The weekly report from the German Naval Command, Italy regarding the supply situation gives in general a satisfactory picture. There is a shortage of 3.7 cm guns. The transfer of the captured naval guns which were transported to Germany at the end of September is considered to be of primary importance. The supplies for the west coast of Italy overdue until now are slowly arriving. The transport situation is affected by the high number of naval landing craft at present in dock, as well as by bad weather conditions.

Supply in the Adriatic south of Ancona is being considerably disturbed by the renewed appearance of enemy surface forces and the sinking of five auxiliary vessels. An attempt will be made to carry on the supply with single auxiliary sailing vessels.

3. Area Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

On 3 Dec. the enemy carried out four air raids on Sibenik, causing wide-spread devastation. One Italian PT boat, 2 patrol boats, 1 oil-barge and 1 fishing smack were sunk. The jetty was partly destroyed. Further air raids were directed against Trogir, Ciovo and Split. On 4 Dec. an auxiliary sailing vessel in the Gulf of Cattaro was machine-gunned by three enemy fighters. Three detonations were observed abreast of Dubrovnik at 2115; the reason has not yet been determined.

Admiral, Adriatic Sea has asked the German Naval Command, Italy for the assignment of available escort vessels for operation "Delphin", since some of the Siebel ferries to be employed were put out of action by the enemy and the remainder are only partly operational. The success of the operation is doubtful unless more vessels can be requisitioned.

b. Aegean Sea:Enemy Situation:

In the morning radio monitoring intercepted numerous sighting reports from planes in the western Aegean concerning our small craft.

Own Situation:

At noon two auxiliary sailing vessels put in to Porto Lago with the shipwrecked crew of PT boat S "511" (?), which was attacked from the air and sunk. There were no details. One auxiliary sailing vessel engaged in rescuing a ditched Arado was strafed by an enemy plane west of Leros; two German sailors were killed.

With regard to the increased submarine danger in the Aegean Sea, Group South considers it necessary to commence escorting east-west bound traffic immediately, as well as to protect the harbors of the Dodecanese and of the alternative ports by minefields. In addition to this the endangered coastal areas must be likewise protected. Group South states that the November allotment of 61 UMB's and 250 EMF's is completely insufficient and urgently requests new supplies and priority of delivery.

The Naval Staff decided as follows:

1. New minelaying operations necessitated by the changing situation in the Aegean Sea will demand the postponement or restriction of present plans, as the general situation and the mine supply situation will not permit priority allocations to the Aegean area.

2. As far as it can be seen from data available there were altogether

992 EMC's, EMF's, FMR's, UMA's stored in the Aegean area on 15 Nov. 133 mines were on the way to the Aegean area, while 1,100 mines were ready for shipment from Germany. Four hundred and sixty one mines had just been allocated, the total number of mines thus amounting to 3,884.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Naval landing craft operating in the Straits of Kerch during the night of 4 Dec. sank two motor gunboats, one tug and one lighter loaded with ammunition off Eltigen. The remainder of the enemy formation, about eight planes withdrew to the east. Mine clearance vessels did not come in touch with the enemy, but were machine-gunned by two fighters; the personnel suffered slight casualties. Two naval landing craft were destroyed and a further one was damaged in the course of an enemy air attack on Kamysch Burun at 1130.

According to a report from Admiral, Black Sea dated 4 Dec. 14 naval landing craft were a total loss and 16 further barges were damaged by enemy action since 1 Nov. On 4 Dec. there was a total of 66 barges, 30 of which were ready for operations, 5 were partially operational, and 31 were out of action. Already the number is no longer sufficient for the execution of the urgent escort and supply tasks. As Admiral, Black Sea is expecting further losses, he has sent an urgent request for support to Group South regarding the accelerated completion and delivery of the naval landing craft now under construction. (See Teletype 2157).

During the night of 4 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch will be manned by six naval landing craft and three motor minesweepers.

A sweep by five PT boats against enemy ships sailing under cover of the Caucasus coast was broken off southeast of Gelendjik at 2110 on account of unfavorable weather conditions.

The shipping routes Sevastopol and Balaclava was searched for AT-mines without result.

The steamer JOHN MAERSK escorted by one destroyer, tow submarine chasers and two mine clearance vessels left Constanta for Sevastopol.

With regard to the land fighting in the Crimea Admiral, Black Sea reports that further gains are made in the course of the attack on the Eltigen beachhead.

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In the Bakchi beachhead all enemy attacks were repulsed despite strong tank support; slight combat activity was reported from the northern front.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

A British note addressed to Turkey on the subject of entering the war against Germany has now been answered. The answer is being sent by courier thus making any examination impossible. German diplomatic circles believe that the note is in the nature of a refusal.

There is no other news of importance available.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Report of Chief, Operations Branch, Operations Division:

a. Reference to the worn condition of the naval landing craft operating in the Straits of Kerch.

The Chief, Naval Staff stated that the operations must be continued until the Eltigen beachhead is eliminated.

b. With regard to the order of the Operations Division, Naval Staff concerning the employment of ground mines when landings are imminent, (see War Diary 11 Nov.) Group West has expressed its opinion and doubts regarding the laying out of such minefields in a detailed report dated 27 Nov. The mines' short period of effectiveness was pointed out (15 - 20 days), which gave rise to the danger that if the imminence of the landing were incorrectly gauged the mines would be dropped either too early or too late. The problem of the storage of mines is considered a further difficulty. Therefore instead of laying out the mines at short notice, Group West plans to lay out the 1,200 ground mines at present available in the western area as dependent foreshore minefields at places particularly endangered by landings, and requests approval of this measure.

Chief, of Naval War Staff pointed out the possibility of sabotage action against cable installations and danger from the air, and approves the attitude taken by the Operations Division.

Thus the following order to Group West is being prepared:

I. a. It is agreed that the correct time for the laying out of independent minefields would be difficult to assess. However, the difficulties can be reduced by suitable preparations: construction of chutes on patrol vessels, establishment of mining and barrage sub-units (for instance: Calais, Dieppe, Fecamp).

b. Mines to be directed above all against the transport landing craft rather than against the small craft. For this the firing unit MA I (5 m 0e) is adequate up to a depth of 8 m.

c. Period of effectiveness of the mines is limited only in case of frequent or continuous movement (for instance in surf, in strong current or on a hard bottom). On a soft bottom or in loose sand the mines generally soon become embedded, in which case they lie still and remain effective for the normal period. Efforts are being made to improve the antirolling device.

2. Although foreshore minefields give the advantage of constant preparedness, they nevertheless have the following disadvantages:

a. The position of the minefield is bound to be close to the land because of the cables. The position is difficult to keep secret on account of the wiring and switch boxes; in consequence the minefields can easily be eliminated by air attacks, bombardment from the sea, or capture or outflanking by the enemy.

b. The constant maintenance of cables and batteries demand the employment of specially trained personnel, in addition to which the installations must be constantly guarded.

c. The wiring installations demand a high expenditure of material, and there is not yet sufficient for the most urgent needs of various kinds.

d. The technical execution and switching makes exact supervision and individual attention necessary; in spite of this failures are liable to occur.

3. Thus when planning dependent foreshore minefields it is advised that they be limited or concentrated on the protection of harbors. Final approval depends on whether execution is possible from the technical angle. A report on the experiences so far made with dependent minefields, as well as circuit diagrams, will be furnished by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

The main emphasis is still to be laid on the preparation of independent minefields.

4. Only a limited effect is to be expected from either kind of ground mine defense against enemy landings and mass attacks, owing to the relatively small number of mines available and the consequent wide spacing between mines. Therefore the possible effectiveness of these minefields must not be overrated - especially in army circles."

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The Bureau of Naval Armament, Underwater Obstacles Branch and the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff will be informed to this effect. The Bureau of Naval Armament, Underwater Obstacles Branch will be asked

I. to make a technical examination of the circuit proposed by Group West immediately, and estimate the possibility of failure,

2. to step up work on the improvement of the LMB anti-rolling device by every possible means.

The Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division requests that the report from Naval Command, North Sea and the Commanding Admiral, Netherlands regarding their experiences so far with the various kinds of circuits used with dependent mine-fields on all fronts (above all in the area of Group West), be submitted as soon as possible.

Instructions will be issued after a renewed report from the Mine Warfare Section by the Chief, Naval Staff.

Copy of 1/Skl I E 40980/43 Gkdos. with view taken by Group West see records of 1/Skl I E.

II. Report from the Quartermaster General, Naval Staff,

a. Fortification of the south coast of France.

The Chief, Naval Staff was given his approval. No changes will be made.

b. Question of the Danube monitors: The request for tugs submitted to the Armed Forces High Command was refused as they are absolutely indispensable for transport purposes. The Navy is to receive other tugs for conversion. The Fuehrer made the following remark:

"I suppose the Navy will want to start building class 'H' battleships again."

III. With regard to the employment of Italian personnel belonging to the unit Grossi, the Chief, Naval Staff has decided as follows:

Grossi will man the 4th Patrol Boat Flotilla, but no other kind of naval vessels except the transport submarines; it will be used to form land units only (smoke-producing units, coast-artillery etc.), even if there are more men than required. Only former submarine crews to whom the Chief, Naval Staff gave a promise at the time may go to sea.

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Special Items.

I. Group South again requests that the CB-boat lying in Linz be allocated to Admiral, Black Sea and of the remaining 14 boats, 6 to Admiral, Aegean and 6 to Admiral, Adriatic, (2 boats to be kept in reserve); furthermore that German personnel be assigned to and trained in the training unit to be established at Pola. Group South asks the Operations Division to approve this proposal and make the allocations accordingly. For copy see Teletype 2130.

Fleet Operations Section, Operations Division, will be sent to Sofia on about 13 Dec. to discuss questions pending in the southeastern area, and will settle this matter also. Attitude of Operations Division, Naval Staff will be submitted soon.

II. Group South transmits a report from the Naval Liaison Staff, Runania according to which the Minister President informed the German General in Bucharest that the affair of the Italian submarines in Constanta would very soon be settled in conformity with the German demands.

III. The Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff informed the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) of the viewpoint of the Naval Staff regarding the organization of the Croatian Navy. For copy of the teletype as per 1/Skl 41194/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

IV. The following order was received from the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster:

"Subject: Fuehrer Directive on sea transport in the Aegean, Adriatic and Black Sea areas:

1. The questions put by the Operations Staff must be answered without delay. The Operations Staff of the Armed Forces therefore asks for a general impression of the sea transport situation in the Aegean, Adriatic and Black Sea which the Shipping Office should be able to furnish, immediately, and this will serve as preliminary information.

2. The summary of transport demands submitted by the Army General Staff includes the general supplies for all three branches of the Armed Forces. A classification of the various kinds of supplies will be made; its absence, however, must not cause any further delay in submitting the report which has been requested."

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V. The easy successes scored by the enemy against the auxiliary sailing vessel traffic south of Ancona reported on 5 Nov. force us to examine the question of whether the maintenance of unprotected sea transports off the northwest Adriatic coast is still worth the high risk to the shipping involved. The German Naval Command, Italy with copy to Group South and Admiral, Adriatic has been asked to submit a review of the situation, taking into consideration the fact that, if necessary, the Italian front can be supplied exclusively over land, whereas the east coast of the Adriatic can only be maintained by seaborne supplies.

VI. In accordance with request of Group South the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has ordered the formation of an Ordnance Command, an Underwater Obstacles Branch, a Naval Administration and Supply Office as well as enlargement of the infirmary of the Naval Artillery Detachment 624 in Porto Lago. For the time being the establishment of a weather station is not approved, but investigation is to be made to see how far the Air Force installations can be made use of.

VII. The Ship Construction Commission has given its attitude with regard to the state of the development projects in the province of the Artillery Branch of the Bureau of Naval Armament. For copy as per 1/Skl 41489/43 Gkdos. see records of 1/Skl III a.

VIII. The inquiry of the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) regarding the report made by the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Fuehrer on the enlargement of the base at Constanta has been settled by the receipt of Rumanian approval in the meantime. (See War Diary 28 Nov. Vol. 3). An order from the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff is worded as follows:

"1. Since the receipt of Rumanian consent, the enlargement of the submarine base at Constanta has been approved.

2. The consequent increase of personnel will be restricted at once to a maximum of 200 workers, and to a maximum of 300 men of military personnel as from the middle of next year.

3. The Foreign Office has been asked to give priority to the question of expenses within the framework of German-Rumanian economic negotiations."

IX. Fresh intelligence reports have been received concerning the supposedly imminent enemy landings in northern and southern France as well as in Greece. For copies see Teletypes 1850 and 1851.

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Situation 6 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

1. On 30 Nov. a British steamer (callsign GA4TP) transmitted a RRRR-report from a British steamer, callsign MW4XU, position 0605 South, 2915 West.

2. An unknown ship, callsign BA4Yk, transmitted a QQQ-report in 0701 South, 2156 West on 1 Dec.: "Am being pursued by a suspicious vessel".

All ships in foreign waters were informed by Radiogram 2112.

2. Own Situation:

According to a report from the Naval Attache Tokyo, Italians were embarked on the BURGENLAND and WESERLAND. The Naval Staff considers this measure highly undesirable, for if they are captured the same disadvantages are to be expected as those which arose last year when the Norwegians were captured. The Naval Attache Tokyo has been instructed to secure the approval of the Naval Staff first in cases of this kind in future.

In addition, Naval Attache Tokyo has been asked to investigate the whereabouts of five soldiers who, according to the card-index of the Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas should have been aboard the MICHEL (see Telegram 2114).

All ships in foreign waters received the following instructions in Radiogram 2113:

"British single ships in the sea area Natal - Freetown and in the North Atlantic are proceeding on zig-zag courses. Blockade-runners are to proceed in the same way. As there is no danger from submarines slight legs of 20 - 40 degrees from the general course will suffice. If ships are sighted, above all by enemy planes, they are to make long legs in exactly the same way as the enemy ships, in order to deceive the enemy planes. By night zigzagging is necessary only if the ship has been sighted. The loss of time caused by zigzagging must be taken into consideration when points have to be reached at a definite time."

II. Situation West Area.I. Enemy Situation:

Forty five enemy planes engaged on reconnaissance and one escort plane were observed over the Bay of Biscay. A British vessel was detected in BF 1310 and 1240.

On 5 Dec. at 1430 our air reconnaissance sighted a freighter 280 miles west of Clifdon, course 250 degrees. Reconnaissance carried out in the sea area west and northwest of Ireland on 6 Dec. was without result.

2. Own Situation:Atlantic Coast:

One ELM/A was cleared off Brest. A minesweeper was damaged during the operation. Three homeward-bound submarines were escorted off St. Nazaire.

Ships of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla put in to Bordeaux, Blaye and Dauillac.

The steamer TAUNUS was transferred from Brest to La Pallice.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

A supplementary report states that on the evening of 4 Dec. an enemy plane was shot down by the naval anti-aircraft artillery, Borkum.

Two mines were cleared north of Terschelling and one mine north of Borkum. The convoy "470" entered the Hook. The convoy "47;" Elbe -Hook started from the Elbe at 0900 strongly protected by 19 balloons. Further transfer of the OSTRIESLAND from Dunkirk to Flushing has been temporarily postponed. The fires were extinguished.

Ground mines have frequently been cleared in the course of occasional minesweeping operations off the west coast of Jutland. Thus it is possible that the enemy is systematically mining this area, a fact which was not observed until now as ships scarcely ever sailed there. The Naval Commands, North and East with copy to Group North/Fleet, have therefore

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been instructed to carry out mine reconnaissance off the west coast of Jutland as far as the forces available will permit, in order to get some idea of the enemy's intentions and the possibility of a landing, as well as an idea of what counter measures may be necessary.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Twenty one planes were located operating over the North Sea.

In the morning a submarine was located and fought in the Soerøe Fjord.

At 0930 two PT boats were sighted south of Geita lighthouse proceeding at high speed on westerly course.

On 5 Dec. at 1613 the minesweeper R "304" sighted two PT boats off Sakriskjaer lighthouse leaving the Domefjord. After gun fire the boats were lost to sight in the snow storm.

At 0531 radio monitoring intercepted a long urgent radio message from Whitehall addressed to the British headquarters at Murmansk and Archangel.

Own Situation:

On the morning of 5 Dec. the destroyers Z "31" and RIEDEL left Kristiansand South in an easterly direction. The motor vessel OSTMARK as well as the BRUMMER, ELSASS and LODY left Kristiansand South at 1500 on 6 Dec. to carry out mine-laying.

Twenty ships were escorted north and 43 ships south. Twelve ships remained in harbor.

The submarine U "713" carried out special task (landing of weather station on Bear Island) as planned.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

At 0845 two gun carriers and four patrol boats were shelled by the battery "Koenigsberg" while embarking enlisted personnel from the end of the northern jetty at Leningrad. The boats returned to Leningrad. A tug and a medium-sized craft were anchored in Luga Bay northeast of Lavansaari at about noon. At 1445 seven craft were sailing off Seiskari, course east.

2. Own Situation:

Minesweeping planes cleared 3 ELM/J in the area of Schulzgrund.

A supplementary report states that on 29 Nov. minesweeping planes cleared two mines in the skerries east of Helsinki. Otherwise nothing to report.

V. Merchant Shipping.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) and the Operations Staff, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas that up till 6 Dec. 1943.

altogether 16 ships totalling 76,136 BRT

were transferred from Genoa to southern France without loss.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

At 1414 the returning damaged submarine U "269" reported a convoy in BE 19 heading southwards. Group "Weddigen" was ordered to operate against this convoy which was presumed to be a southwest-bound ON convoy. The group was ordered to patrol the reconnaissance line from BE 1779 to 4549, course east, speed 8 knots fs from 2400. An exact position report was not received until 0400 on 7 Dec. as the shadowing submarine's transmitter was jammed. According to this report the convoy was sailing in BE 1676 in southerly direction at 1900. On receipt of this Group "Weddigen" was ordered to operate at high speed in accordance with the latest report.

Group "Coronel", in the patrol line as ordered, expects the convoy some time after 1900.

No reports were received from the Indian Ocean.

VII. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day only single planes approached the coast in

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the western area. At noon one Mosquito was sighted in the Skagerrak area, over Frederikshavn and over Kristiansand. No enemy activity was reported during the night.

2. German Reich Territory:

Nothing to report.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

There are no reports of our own operations.

Enemy bombers and fighter-bombers were active over the front. At noon 80 four-engined bombers with fighter escort were over Pisa. No attack took place, evidently due to bad weather.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast, 15 reconnaissance planes were detected in the area of Valona - Durazzo and over the Aegean respectively, while during the night five enemy planes were engaged supplying partisans.

Strong enemy formations attacked the airfields of Eleusis and Calamaki about noon. Altogether four Ju 88's were destroyed and four others damaged. Thirteen other planes, including nine BF 109's were slightly damaged. The enemy lost five bombers and one fighter. One of our fighters is missing.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation: Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The steamer VIRGILIO (11,780 BRT) was torpedoed by a submarine northeast of St. Tropez at 0820, while sailing in convoy from Spezia to Marseilles. Rescue operations are in progress.

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2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

PT boats broke off minelaying task "Ulan" during the night of 5 Dec. on account of unfavorable weather conditions. One boat put in to Via Reggio with engine trouble, while the remaining six boats put in to Piombino. One motor minesweeper was transferred from Genoa to Piacenza.

It is reported that during the night of 5 Dec. the harbor and city of Benedetto were bombarded by two destroyers and several PT boats.

The torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" left St. Stefano to carry out minelaying task "Parade".

Contrary to the report of 5 Dec. the five auxiliary sailing vessel sunk between Ancona and Benedetto on 4 Dec. were annihilated by enemy destroyers; the action was clearly visible from the coast.

The coastal traffic south of Ancona has been resumed. Motor coasters are to proceed independently at four-hourly intervals. The submarine U "596" was assigned the attack area between the Otranto Straits and Cape Passero.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

According to a report from Group South the operations against the isle of Solta will commence on 6 Dec. with the first landing at dawn in the northwest corner of the island. The anti-aircraft artillery cruiser NOIBE will provide artillery support; one torpedo boat will support the infantry while a further torpedo boat will bar the channel from Solta to Brac.

No report concerning the commencement of the operation has yet been received.

The Naval Staff approved the proposal to rename the cruiser CATTARO - NIOBE.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to a report from Xth Air Force Corps, a damaged Greek destroyer which was detected by photographic reconnaissance in Turkish Territorial waters has disappeared.

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A submarine was proceeding 16 miles east of the northern tip of Rhodes on 5 Dec. at 0700.

At about 1400 five planes attacked the steamer ISIS while sailing off the northern tip of Santorin; the ship was set on fire.

Own Situation:

With regard to the air attack on the PT boat S "511" on the afternoon of 4 Dec. it is reported that the boat sank off Macronisi. The German commander of the boat was killed on 5 Dec. during an air attack on the auxiliary sailing vessel.

On 5 Dec. four mines were successfully cleared in the harbor entrances of Syra.

The harbor and roadstead of Iraklion was re-opened to shipping on 6 Dec. By night shipping in Calamata Bay is greatly endangered by numerous floating mines.

In the evening the steamer LEDA put out from Piraeus for Lerics with 500 German troops and escorted by the torpedo boats TA "15", "16" and minesweepers R "211".

On 5 Dec. the hospital ship GRADISCA left Suda Bay for Trieste. So far there is no report on her load.

The Combat Team Mueller reported on 5 Dec. that the day passed quietly.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

There are no special reports.

Own Situation:

Forces operating in the Straits of Kerch during the night of 5 Dec. fought a short action off Eltigen with two enemy patrol boats, which then made off to the east.

At 0400 the Eltigen beachhead was shelled by our naval landing craft. During the night of 6 Dec. six minesweepers and three mine clearance vessels will patrol the Kerch Straits. A naval landing craft operating off Eltigen reported at 2400: "Transport's attempt to evacuate frustrated. Prisoners taken." From this Admira, Black Sea deduces that the enemy is trying to evacuate the beachhead by sea. The Army expects that the beachhead will be in our hands by the evening of 7 Dec.

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The Naval Artillery Detachment shot down one enemy plane. On 5 Dec. two tugs sailing off Otchakov were shelled by our artillery. Two further tugs were engaged by enemy artillery on 6 Dec. while putting in to Otchakov. A harbor defense boat sank north-northwest of Sulina as a result of a leak in the engine room. The place where the SANTA FE was wrecked was swept for moored mines without result.

Group South reports that fighter escort for Rumanian fighters in Ackermann and Sacki is prohibited on the basis of the agreement of 1 Dec. between the Rumanian Naval Air Command and the Rumanian General Staff. Operation of fighters is only permitted in case of "scrambles" and distances of up to 30 km out to sea. The Rumanian fighter planes based at Ackermann are primarily intended for the local defense of Odessa, Sulina and Ackermann. Fighter escort is intended only as a secondary task. Group South states that Rumanian behavior is not consistent with the basic agreements, and that our convoys remain unprotected in a critical situation; it is requested that the Rumanians be induced to change their attitude immediately or that German fighter forces be transferred to that area without delay.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff is taking the matter up with Air Force, Operations Staff.

IX. Situation East Asia:

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.I. Army Situation:

On the eastern front the defensive fighting is concentrated in the 8th Army Sector. Our offensive in the Zhitomir - Kiev area continues. Enemy resistance is stiffening. It is reported that strong partisan activity is reviving in the region of Minsk.

Tito has received (or has conferred upon himself!) the rank of Marshall.

II. Report of the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster General, Naval Staff on the state of naval emergency units:

Altogether 73,000 men in the area of Naval Command, East and 31,000 men in the area of Naval Command, North have been designated for engagement in the western area and in Denmark.

Transfer of commands or troops will be ordered in accordance with the priority degrees A - C and will be directed by the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff. Reinforcements for floating forces and coastal artillery have already been withdrawn.

The requisition of arms will follow separately through the Armed Forces High Command. The latter was informed by the Admiral at Fuehrer Headquarters that a withdrawal of the emergency units would completely paralyze the whole organization of the Navy.

III. Foreign Affairs Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff reported on the Rumanian apology regarding the incident with the Italian CB-boats. Copy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII. For political reasons the Fuehrer is not inclined to enforce the handing over of the Italians who broke faith.

Special Items:

I. With regard to the organization of the PT boats in the Mediterranean, the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff issued the following order:

A. I. Along with the transfer of the 3rd PT boat Flotilla to the Command of Naval Group, South, the 1st PT Boat Div. is also attached to Naval Group, South.

2. Naval Group will assign the 1st PT Boat Division in such a way that it is always subordinate to the Commanding Admiral of that area where PT boat operations are being concentrated. The 1st PT Boat Division will then be operationally under that command and administratively detached. Before detachment the Commander, PT Boats will be the authority in command.

3. The following regulations apply to PT boat Flotillas under the command of Naval Group, South:

a. Flotillas in the area of the Commanding Admiral, which are under command of the 1st PT Boat Division as in paragraph two, will be fully subordinate to the 1st PT Boat Division.

b. Flotillas assigned to the other Commanding Admiral will be subordinate to him operationally as well as administratively detached. In this case the authority in Command before detachment will be the 1st PT Boat Division.

B. I. Of the former Italian PT boats, only the minesweepers will be taken over. With the exception of those boats just captured in the Aegean, all Italian PT boats already commissioned by the 1st PT Boat Division are to be de-commissioned.

2. The minesweepers in the Adriatic and six minesweepers in the western Mediterranean are to be seized and taken over. The six boats in the Mediterranean will be transferred to the command of Naval Group, South and formed, with the boats already there, into the 25th PT Boat Flotilla.

3. The minesweeper which is equipped with special devices for assault boats is to be detached and transferred to the 10th Italian PT boat Flotilla, Commander Borghese, so that the 25th PT Boat Flotilla eventually consists of eight boats.

C. Naval Group, South and Naval Command, Italy will carry this out in their separate areas, in conjunction with the 1st PT Boat Flotilla. The deadlines for the transfer and new indentifications will be issued through Fleet Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff".

II. In accordance with instructions from the Fuehrer, the High Command of the Army has issued a

Fundamental Directive No. 20

dated 5 Dec. 1943 on the basis of the Fuehrer directive of 27 Nov. 1943 (see War Diary 1 Dec., Special Items, Para. V).

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The Fuehrer instructed the Armed Forces High Command to lay special emphasis on this order which has been sent to all Commanders in Chief direct.

Fundamental Directive No. 20 deals with Army and Army Group measures, the measures of the High Command, (establishment of Special Staffs) as well as fundamental directives for the purpose of facilitating these measures (number of the regiment on the shoulder strap and so on).

The order was sent to the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division (1/Skl 41834/43 Gkdos.).

On the basis of the same Fuehrer Directive of 27 Nov. 1943 the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command has ordered the formation of a military unit consisting of three military police commands (mechanised) and three military police battalions (mechanised) to be operational as from 1 Jan. 1944.

For order as per 1/Skl 41595/43 Gkdos. see records of 1/Skl III a.

III. The Naval Intelligence Division transmitted an extract from the situation report by the Army General Staff, Foreign Armies, West dated 5 Dec. 1943 addressed to the Groups, to the German Naval Command, Italy, and Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean. For copy as per 1/Skl 41351/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part D, Vol. "Information on the Enemy Situation".

Operations Division, Naval Staff reserves the right to submit its own evaluation of the situation later.

Situation 7 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Operations Division, Naval Staff sent additional data to Group West regarding armament, appearance and reference points of the blockade-runners OSORNO and ALSTERUFER.

For copy of the letter 1/Skl I k 3602/43 Gkdos. Chefs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

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II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nineteen planes were observed operating over the Bay of Biscay. One British vessel was located in each of the following positions:

on 6 Dec. at 1240 in BF 1310

on 7 Dec. at 1005 in BF 1170

at 1537 in BE 7980

At 1542 our air reconnaissance sighted one large merchantman, five destroyers and one further ship of unidentified type sailing off Start Point: Atlantic reconnaissance was without result.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One mine was cleared off La Pallice, while two further mines were cleared off Brest. One steamer (1,001 BRT) engaged in Spanish ore traffic was escorted.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

Three mines were cleared in the Borkum and Terschelling area ahead of the convoy "471" Elbe - Hook. The convoy went through as planned.

The tanker OSTFRIESLAND left Dunkirk at 2045 en route to Flushing.

Five convoys totalling 22,000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Zee and in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Twenty three planes were observed operating in the region of the west coast and west of Jutland as far as 4

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degrees East and 55 degrees North.

Our air reconnaissance observed there was no shipping in Thorshavn at 1055; seven destroyers, course 270 degrees, were sighted 80 miles northeast of the Faeroes at 1125, and eight destroyers, course 320 degrees, were proceeding 50 miles east of these islands at 1234.

On 6 Dec. at 1200 the Intelligence Station at Bergen reported that two submarines had been sighted.

On 5 Dec. one enemy plane entered the Vardoe area, while on 6 Dec. one Mosquito entered the Egersund area and two Blenheims and the Bergen area. On 7 Dec. at 1919 seven planes bombed and machine-gunned one of our southbound convoys in the area of Baholmen (south of Stadlandet) without particular success.

Own Situation:

After carrying out the minelaying task as planned the minelaying formation consisting of the OSTMARK, BRUMMER, ELSASS and LODY put into Kristiansand South at 0900.

Twenty three ships were escorted to the North and 43 ships to the South. Sixteen ships remained in harbor on account of shortage of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Isolated harassing fire along the coast of Kronstadt Bay. Slight air reconnaissance activity was observed over Ustluga and the Kurgolovo peninsula. Two planes were hit with anti-aircraft fire.

2. Own Situation:

One mine was cut in the northern part of the Skagerrak declared area in AN 3647 two mines, apparently from minefield I were also cleared. This proves that some of the mines in this minefield are still effective. One ELM/A was cleared off Moen and one in Danzig Bay.

The target tug KAPELLA sank west of Darserort outside the swept channel after an explosion; there were some casualties.

On 6 Dec. an explosive cutter exploded aboard the minesweeper M "3112", causing some casualties.

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Otherwise nothing to report.

V. Submarine Warfare.

I. Operation Group "Weddigen":

At 0800 the submarine U "424" reported the convoy in position BE 4671. Thus it was confirmed that the convoy proceeding on a southerly course. As the shadower was the most southern boat of the Group the boats would have need a whole day in order to get ahead of the convoy. As this was impossible under the present air conditions and lack of adequate anti-aircraft armament the operation had to be given up. Group "Weddigen" was dissolved, three boats were attached to Group "Coronel". The remaining five boats were on their way back.

2. Operation Group "Coronel":

As no air reconnaissance was possible on 7 Dec. the Group had to wait for the convoy in patrol line. On the basis of radio monitoring at 2000 it was assumed that the enemy route had been shifted about 60 miles further to the north so the Group was ordered to proceed northwards at 2100 at a speed of seven knots. Shortly after midnight a boat 30 miles north of the patrol line reported from AL 1554 loud convoy radio telephonic traffic without a bearing. The Group was ordered to submerge at sunrise and to remain under water in the new patrol line 60 miles north of the former line, and to continue to patrol the area.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

No special reports on operations.

On 6 Dec. two Ju 88's on night fighter patrol in the Cape Ortegal area sighted six Spanish fishing vessels 90 miles west-northwest of Bordeaux at 1900. While flying over these vessels the Lichtenstein gear was jammed on all three frequencies. The jamming stopped four minutes after passing over the boats. The Air Commander, Atlantic dispatched a further plane to the same fishing vessels to investigate; this time nothing of the sort was experienced. The Air Commander, Atlantic considers the original report unreliable. Group West also does not believe that Spanish fishing vessels possess radar gear.

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2. German Reich Territory

Nothing to report.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our Air Force carried out reconnaissance flights.

At noon the enemy dropped bombs on Civitavecchia as well as on other localities and Tarquinia.

In the Aegean 23 enemy reconnaissance planes were observed by day while during the night of 7 Dec. seven planes were observed supplying partisans in the Balkan area and nine planes were reconnoitring over the Aegean. Altogether two enemy planes were shot down.

4. Eastern Front:

No special reports from the Black Sea area are available.

In the combat area of the 5th Air Force there was a drawn battle between a Mosquito and a Ju 88 off Sognefjord. Our fighters which were ordered into action against an enemy formation which had attacked one of our convoys in the North Fjord area did not achieve any results.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0430 Ceuta reported the passage of ten large freighters and one tanker heading for the Mediterranean.

Two CAIRO class cruisers, 1 auxiliary cruiser, and WARSPITE in the dock, 1 transport, 1 U. S. hospital ship, 39 freighters, 6 tankers, 9 destroyers, 3 oil lighters and others were observed in Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

The torpedoed steamer VIRGILIO is proceeding in tow to Toulon, with anti-submarine protection.

At 1440 the tug FAUCON sank off Toulon as the result of an explosion, probably after being torpedoed by a submarine.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

According to a situation report from Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southwest dated 6 Dec. there has been no reconnaissance information on shipping in the Sardinian and Corsican harbors for over two weeks.

Our air reconnaissance on 7 Dec. sighted nothing further in this area except three coasting vessels, course north, and a southbound unit.

According to radio monitoring on the afternoon of 6 Dec. the convoy traffic in the area of Sicily-Bay of Naples, on course Palermo-Bay of Salerno has again increased considerably.

Own Situation:

The torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" carried out the minelaying operation "Parade" according to plan.

Six PT boats left Piombino in the evening to carry out the minelaying task "Ulan".

The Commander, German Naval Command, Italy reports:

"Enemy destroyers and PT boats are patrolling the coast from Ancona to Guillianova every night, and sometimes by day as well. The supply traffic has been almost completely halted by shelling of the harbors and coastal routes as well as by the sinking of motor coasters laden with supplies for the front. Supply traffic is increasingly dependent on the waterways, since due to enemy air activity very often only one single track line to the south is passable. Therefore the protection of supplies against naval forces is absolutely necessary if seaborne supplies are to be maintained on any scale at all. In reply to the demand for escort vessels, Admiral Adriatic stated that these are not available for the duration of the island operations off the Dalmatian coast, and furthermore requested that the harbor defense vessels still in the western Adriatic be placed at his disposal for mopping-up operations south of Split, as otherwise the success of the operation is doubtful. These vessels are however indispensable on the east coast of Italy. Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southwest has again asked for the establishment of a coastal warning service by patrol boats at places particularly threatened by enemy landings. The Naval Command is of the opinion that harbor defense boats should be employed on this service and also as armed transports as far as space permits. A decision is requested as to which task is the more urgent. In addition to this Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southwest once more requested the mining of the coastal zone as a prerequisite for successful defense. This is not possible with only the means at present available."

The German Naval Command, Italy reported to the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff that 305 Italian Volunteers including six officers are employed in that area. Of these, three officers and 118 NCO's and enlisted men are employed with naval artillery detachments, one officer and 45 NCO's and enlisted men are employed as engineers in construction units, and two officers and 136 NCO's and enlisted men are employed by the Port Commander on sentry duty. More Italians are employed in dockyard staffs and dockyards. Independent Italian organizations such as harbor, lighthouse and communications service exist in all important ports and are subordinate either to the German Naval Shore Commanders or Port Commanders, as the case may be.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 6 Dec. at 2356 two vessels, probably destroyers, passed Bar at a distance of 5 miles in a northerly direction. It is probable these vessels opened fire for a short while in the vicinity of Budua, north of Petrovek, at 0200. So far there are no detailed reports.

Own Situation:

The operation "Delfin" was postponed. A new deadline has not yet been fixed. The cruiser NIOBE put in to Trieste.

Admiral, Adriatic reports that the Bauxite shipping has not yet commenced since the islands south of Split are still not clear of the enemy. (See teletype 1350).

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

By day strong enemy air activity in the sea- and island area of Leros. Some machine-gun attacks were carried out. At 0015 the convoy "Leda" was detected by reconnaissance. On 6 Dec. at 2320 it is probable that aerial mines were dropped on the harbor of Porto Lago. On the same day at 2055 the submarine base at Salamis was bombed. No damage was caused to the submarines or warehouses or to the dockyard.

Own Situation:

An auxiliary sailing vessel laden with 100 tons of aviation gasoline for Crete was set on fire by an enemy plane in the area of Santorin, and not the steamer ISIS as was first reported.

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On the evening of 6 Dec. the PT boats S "36" and S "55" left Piraeus for Samos, and left Vathi on 7 Dec. at 1520 with the Commanding Admiral, Aegean to arrive at Porto Lago at 1800.

On 6 Dec. the PT boat S "601" was commissioned to the 24th PT Boat Flotilla.

On the afternoon of 7 Dec. the steamer LEDA continued its journey under escort from Leros to Samos with 3,000 prisoners of war on board.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 0940 a submarine was bombed by one of our reconnaissance planes northwest of Eupatoria.

Own Situation:

During the night of 6 Dec. naval landing craft off Eltigen sank 2 fully laden landing craft, 2 fishing smacks, 1 towed boat and 2 rafts, by means of which the enemy was trying to escape by sea. Prisoners were taken. This increased the number of enemy craft sunk by our naval forces in the course of the blockade of the beachhead to 8 motor gunboats, 2 PT boats, 16 landing craft, 2 tugs, and 7 other craft; altogether 35 craft. Eleven gunboats, 2 PT boats and 6 landing craft were damaged or set on fire. Since 1 Dec. altogether 40 naval landing craft, 6 mine clearance vessels and 6 PT boats were in action in the Straits of Kerch on 55 days in 368 operations, thereby preventing all enemy supply by sea. Most of our losses were due to bombing: 11 naval landing craft sank, 16 further barges were damaged, another 4 minesweeping vessels and 1 PT boat were damaged. Our personnel losses: 16 men killed in action, 34 men wounded, 32 men missing.

During the night of 7 Dec. six naval landing craft and three minesweeping vessels will be operating in patrol line in the Straits of Kerch.

Submarine U "20" returned from its operations area and put in to Sevastopol; from there it will proceed to Constanta.

Convoys were carried out as planned and without special event.

The section of the Danube between Georgiu and Sistov has been closed because of danger of mines.

Admiral, Black Sea has asked Army Group A to see that adequate supplies are shipped to the Crimea, as until now precious shipping space has not been fully utilized.

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Naval Staff, Operations Division transmitted the report of Group South regarding the Rumanian refusal to provide fighters for fighter escort to the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff, stating that our offensive enemy airfields (Skadovsk) would on its own not have any lasting effect.

d. Special Items:

Group South reported on the sea transport situation in his area as requested.

A. Black Sea:

I. Available: 14 freighters totalling 23,363 BRT
8 tankers " 5,732 BRT
33 lighters " 20,000 tons capacity
11 auxiliary sailing vessels totalling
1,650 tons capacity
14 tugs and 1 freight train ship totalling
300 tons capacity.

2. Transport demands for the Crimea: 50,000 tons, to be provided by steamers totalling 44,600 tons including 12,400 tons of fuel by tankers; as far as the weather conditions allow 12,800 tons in addition can be transported by lighters.

3. Escort can just be provided, if weather conditions are favorable; in unfavorable weather conditions, however, escort would be inadequate.

4. All dockyards are working to maximum capacity on current repairs and construction of armed fishing vessels, naval landing craft and war transport ships.

5. An increase in the available small ships' tonnage is not likely, as the supply of new craft is at least counteracted by losses due to enemy action.

B. Aegean Sea:

I. Available and ready for operations:

22 freighters totalling 35,491 BRT
4 tankers " 7,218 BRT
180 auxiliary sailing vessels
totalling 15,000 tons capacity

2. The total demand for 68,000 tons as per OKM Skl Qu A sechs, S 167/43 stands in contrast to the demand for 29,000 tons by Army Group E, made in the course of the discussion at Salonica on 27 Nov. The latter can be provided with 31,000 tons as soon as the Italian prisoners have been withdrawn and troop transfers from the islands have been completed.

3. The operational readiness and seaworthiness of the escort vessel is inadequate to the needs of the escort service.

Reasons: The destroyers and torpedo boats taken over from the Italians are very liable to breakdown and the losses in submarine chasers and naval landing craft as a result of the Dodecanese operations were severe.

4. The dockyard installations are employed on current repairs and new construction on armed fishing vessels, but execution is subjected to continuous delays by the inadequate number and low output of the Greek workers.

5. Of the craft awaiting repair 30 auxiliary sailing vessels totalling about 3,000 tons can be completed by April 1944; this number, however, will be counteracted by losses caused by enemy air and submarine activity.

C. Adriatic Sea:

I. Available and ready for operations:

24 freighters totalling	59,100 BRT
6 tankers	" 9,343 BRT
about 100 auxiliary sailing vessels	
	5,000 tons capacity.

2. Tonnage necessary for transport: 120,000 tons of which 50-60,000 capacity can be made available. For the time being transport can only be carried out off the Dalmatian coast, as far as the islands off the coast are cleared of the enemy. As a result of enemy activity, traffic along the Albanian coast is only occasionally possible, when conditions are favorable.

3. A security flotilla is being formed to provide an escort service. For the time being the number of boats available is very small. It is not yet possible to judge whether they will be sufficient.

4. German influence on available shipyards is only commencing. The extent to which it will be possible to supplement small shipping cannot yet be estimated.

5. Fresh small ships' tonnage will become available in the spring of 1944 by the completion of 72 wooden auxiliary sailing vessels totalling about 3,000 tons capacity, which are now under construction.

6. Group South has no information concerning the transport situation on the west coast of the Adriatic.

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7. The escort service is widely dependent on air protection, which is for the time being inadequate in both the Adriatic and Black Seas."

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

A conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and the Turkish President of State took place in Cairo. According to a United Press report the following items were discussed:

1. Opening of the Dardanelles to Allied Ships.
2. Russian influences in the Balkans.
3. Measures to be taken against Germany should Turkey enter war.
4. Russian influence in the Middle East.

According to a Turkish report Marshal Tschakmak did not accompany the President of State on the journey to Cairo.

The Chief, Naval Staff is in Berlin for discussions with Minister Speer and Field Marshal Milch.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster General Naval Staff reports on the request for weapons made to the Armed Forces High Command for the equipment of alarm units in Germany. Further demands on behalf of units in the occupied territories will be made by the Commanding General of the Armed Forces in the occupied territories concerned.

The Division Grossi consists of 105 officers, 1,900 NCO's and enlisted personnel. Of these 50 officers, 500 NCO's and enlisted personnel are to provide crews for the 4th Patrol Boat Flotilla.

II. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff transmitted a report from the Turkish Military Attache in Moscow, according to which the assistant to the Chinese military attache has complained that the Allies are not giving Chiang Kai-shek adequate support.

III. Army Situation:

The Eltigen beachhead is clear of the enemy. Enemy attacks in the area of Krementchug were successful. Attempts are being made to establish a new main line of resistance. The eight fresh divisions which were originally intended for the offensive, are already exhausted by the continuous heavy defensive fighting. The enemy spearhead is directed

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against Krivorograd. Five divisions and one combat command have been formed from 15 of our exhausted divisions. Our operations in the Zhitomir - Kiev area are proceeding favorably.

In Italy the heavy defensive battle against the Montgomery offensive continues. On the whole our lines were held.

Special Items.

I. On the basis of a letter of the Aerial Mines Inspectorate, Air Force dated 17 Nov. the escort forces were ordered to examine the question of shorter and quicker designations for swept waterways in the area of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North to be controlled by minesweeping planes, and to submit proposals according to experiences so far made:

a. For the setting and execution of minesweeping tasks by planes with reference to naval terminology:

b. For the limitation of naval authority where minesweeping squadrons are concerned.

Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North will be responsible for compiling and submitting this to the Naval Staff.

For copy as per I/Skl IE 41184/43 Gkdos. see records of I/Skl I E I k.

II. By Special Measure No. 6 the Bureau of Naval Administration, High Command, Navy ordered a new division of naval personnel into groups of age classes, as well as the employment of the different groups of age classes according to the new plan for the employment of personnel. In conjunction with this, the following order was issued;

A. The High Command, Navy has again issued instructions that

I. The youngest and fittest soldiers are to be employed in the front line.

2. Young and fairly young soldiers behind the lines and in Germany are to be sorted out once and for all.

B. The inadequate reserves of young men for submarine service and service afloat on the one hand, and the increased demand for such men for submarines and other naval vessels on the other, renders necessary:

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I. An increased extension of the re-classification drive among naval personnel.

2. Extension of the re-classification drive to include Gunnery and Torpedo Specialist and technical branches of coast and air defense, as far as they belong to the age groups 1910 and later.

This program is aimed at bringing up those men best fit for service to the most advanced front lines - very particularly the submarine arm and other naval units - in time, and in sufficient numbers. Other units will have to take second priority; rearward services are to be assigned the older men with the lowest medical categories.

For copy of the order as per 1/Skl 41646/43 Gkdos. see records of 1/Skl III a.

III. According to information received from the Operations Staff (Navy), Armed Forces High Command on 4 Dec. the Armed Forces High Command intends the formation of 2-3 further companies of coastal military police within the Brandenburg Division. They will be used for clearing, and keeping clear of the enemy, the shipping routes off the Dalmatian and Albanian coast, as these companies of coastal military police are particularly suited for the capture, mopping up and above all for the protection of the islands and groups of islands in the Adriatic. Formation will take place in the Adriatic. Altogether 28 large combined assault boats and 7 combined operations landing craft type 40 are needed, but they are not available. The Operations Staff (Navy), Armed Forces High Command asks the Naval Staff to see whether the Navy can supply or take over any other boats. Furthermore it was asked whether some personnel of both seaman and engine-room branches could be placed at the disposal of the above headquarters.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff has instructed the PT Boat Section Quartermaster Division, to take further action.

IV. As supplement to the report of 14 Nov. (see War Diary 14 Nov. VIII, 2) the German Naval Command, Italy reports:

"The Italian Navy has not yet received basis instructions regarding re-organization. An investigation is requested to see whether the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command took the necessary measures to insure that the Comando Supremo issues clear instructions, in conformity with the directive of the Operations Staff Org. I, Armed Forces High Command 006315/43 Gkdos. of 19 Oct. Only in conjunction with the instructions for the organization of equipment, accommodation etc. do they form the essential conditions for the formation of the units planned."

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The Commander of the German Naval Command also reports on the same matter:

"I. A discussion with the Italian Undersecretary of State, Captain Ferrini on 7 Dec. showed that the latter is quite willing to cooperate in the reorganization of the Italian Armed Forces under the direction of the German Naval Command. The officers' corps has been widely reduced and rejuvenated. The discharge or replacement of all persons who did not place themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the new Armed Forces is in progress. The volunteers will be temporarily detailed to serve with the German Armed Forces on land, and where necessary also at sea, after training by German personnel, so that later they will provide the nucleus for their own units after they have proved their fitness.

2. With regard to the decision of the Naval Staff to continue building CB boats and the question of operating them, F. suggests that the three boats ready for operations in Pola and the boats already completed at Captoni should be left in the Adriatic Sea, where they can be successfully engaged in the coastal and island fighting. Request examination of this proposal and a decision."

The German Naval Command, Italy also asks for information on the incidents in the Black Sea which resulted on 16 Nov. in the cancelling of the order of the High Command, Navy, according to which the Italian submarines were to be commissioned with Italian personnel.

This information was given in teletype I/Skl I m 41561/43 Gkdos. For copy see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

V. With reference to the transport stoppages in material for naval landing craft, the Design and Building Branch, Naval Construction Division, Bureau of Naval Armament informed Quartermaster, Naval Staff that the deadlines for the completion of the Naval landing craft in Varna cannot be kept.

To this the Fleet Branch, Quartermaster Division adds that the building of naval landing craft was brought to a standstill in any case by enemy action and various other circumstances. This is expected to have serious effects on naval warfare. If the above mentioned transport backlog cannot be removed, the complete breakdown of naval landing craft construction is to be expected. The consequences of this are impossible to foresee, since small transport craft are of decisive importance in all theaters of operations. The Fleet Branch, Quartermaster Division has therefore asked the supply and Fuel Branch, Quartermaster Division to take the strongest possible action to insure that the transports will under any circumstances be carried out as planned.

VI. Additional Notes.

In connection with the detailed order 1/Skl I op. 3455/43 Gkdos. Chefs of 19 Nov. (See War Diary 19 Nov.) regarding evacuation of the Crimea at short notice, attention is drawn to the sketch for an evacuation of the Crimea compiled by the Liaison Officer, Army General Staff attached to the High Command, Navy, dated 16 Nov.

Copy in the records of 1/Skl I op. II, 14 Bd., I Bl. 95/96.

Situation 8 Dec.I. War in Foreign Waters.I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The OSORNO has received the following instructions:

"1. U.S.A. -Gibraltar convoys, abbreviation UG, are sailing from 63 degrees West to Gibraltar between the latitudes 32 degrees and 36 degrees North. The returning convoys, abbreviation GU, are sailing through the same area. An additional S behind the abbreviation means "slow", an additional F means "fast".

2. According to dead reckoning UGS "27" will be sailing in DD 13 on 17 Dec. course east, day's run 204 miles, GUS "23" will pass DE 35 on 17 Dec., course west, day's run 204 miles.

3. According to the gap between the convoys the ship is to make for point "Uschi". It is not necessary to keep exactly to point "Uschi". Alter course from northwest to northeast in the vicinity of point "Uschi" by night.

4. "Jungfernstieg" does not provide direct communication between "Wanda" and "Lore", but passes through CD 14, BD 83, BD 68, BE 41."

The ALSTERUFER has received the following instructions:

"1. The abbreviation for the U.S.A. -Gibraltar convoys is UG; that for the convoys sailing in opposite direction is GU.

An additional S behind the abbreviation means "slow", an additional F behind the abbreviation means "fast". The convoys are sailing from 63 degrees West to Grbralter between 32 degrees and 36 degrees North.

2. According to dead reckoning UGS "27" will be sailing in DD 13 on 17 Dec. course east, 204 miles day's run, GUS "23" will pass DE 35 on 17 Dec. course west, day's run 204 miles.

3. According to the gap between the convoys resulting from this position the ship must head for "Uschi". It is not necessary to keep exactly to point "Uschi". Alter course by night from northwest to northeast in the vicinity of point "Uschi".

4. "Jungfernstieg" does not provide direct communication between "Wanda" and "Lore" but passes through CD 14, BD 83, BD 68, BE 41."

All ships sailing in foreign waters received the following message by Radiogram 1905.

"According to the latest available information exchange of recognition signals between enemy merchantmen and planes or warships takes place in the following manner:

1. The plane or the warship orders the merchantmen by means of 2 letters which are changed daily, to exhibit a secret 3-flag-signal and international callsign. The 3-flag-signal is changed about every five days. We have no data concerning this, nor have we any information concerning the changing two-letter call-up. The 3-flag-signal can also be given by flash lamp. In addition to this, planes must be shown the name of the ship fixed outboard below the bridge. After the exchange of recognition signals, particulars as to the ports of departure and destination as well as the date are often asked for.

2. As the secret code (two-letter call-up - 3-flag-signal answer) is not known, the blockade runners may imitate the exchange of recognition signals procedure, but must deliberately hoist the secret 3-flag-signal in such a way that it cannot be read by the enemy. The warship call-up NNJ, known until now, is said to be out of use, but has not yet been officially cancelled.

3. The callsign of the ship whose camouflage the ship is wearing is to be used as the international callsign. If the ship has to be scuttled, an emergency message is to be transmitted using the secret enemy callsign assigned by radiogram.

II. Situation in the Western Area.I. Enemy Situation:

Only one plane was located operating over the Bay of Biscay, whereas seven locations were reported in the rendezvous area in the course of the day. For details see Daily Situation.

At 1225 our air reconnaissance reported a convoy consisting of 30 merchantmen and 15 landing craft protected by six escort vessels sailing in CF 6125, course 40 degrees; probably MKS "32" which left Gibraltar on 3 Dec.

2. Own Situation:Atlantic Coast:

Four submarines were escorted in and two submarines were escorted out. Otherwise nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

The tanker OSTFRIESLAND which left Dunkirk on 7 Dec. at 2045 escorted by the 3rd Motor Minesweeping Flotilla passed out of the command of Group West on easterly course at midnight.

Thirteen snag-line were cleared off Ostend. Otherwise no special events to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

Escort and minelaying tasks were carried out according to plan. Three ground mines were cleared off the West Frisian islands. The tanker OSTFRIESLAND was escorted as far as Flushing. It will proceed to the Hook as soon as visibility improves.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Twenty two planes were located operating over the central and northern North Sea. According to radio monitoring a convoy from Russia was sailing in the area controlled by the radio station at Wick on the evening of 7 Dec. At 1020 on 8 Dec. a submarine attacked one of our eastbound

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convoys in AC 7392, but missed. On 7 Dec. a mine was cut off the entrance to Petsamo. Lively enemy air reconnaissance in the area of Vardoe on the same day.

According to our air reconnaissance three destroyers and 20 - 30 small boats were lying in Skaleyfjord (Faeroes) at about 1100. One of our reconnaissance planes received heavy fire from destroyers' anti-aircraft guns.

Own Situation:

In the course of an enemy attack on a southbound convoy off Stadlandet the submarine chaser 1707 shot down an enemy plane. On 8 Dec. at 1348 an enemy plane approached one of our southbound convoys, and was shot down by fighter planes. At 0910 the steamer RIEGEL (3,828 BRT) ran aground in the Finsnes Strait. Salvage operations are in progress.

Fifty three ships were escorted north and 42 ships south. Eleven ships remained in port due to shortage of escort vessels.

At 0100 the submarine "277" reported a small enemy submarine of unidentified type in AB 3539, and machine-gunned it. U "277" then lost contact.

Submarine U "277" was ordered to patrol the passage through ice north of Bear Island, concentrating in area AB 36.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

While shelling the coast during the course of the day, the enemy scored two direct hits on the Peterhof gun position, causing light material damage and a few casualties. Weak air activity was observed over Luga Bay and Tueters, Single enemy planes were flying in the area of Juminda as far as to the area north of Reval; one of these planes was shot down by one of our fighters at 1139.

2. Own Situation:

On 7 Dec. at 1900 a German motor boat caught fire while it was being entrained at Svendborg. Otherwise no special events are reported from the whole Baltic Sea area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Following the report on loud convoy radio telephony traffic received from submarine U "311" from AL 1554, the boats of Group "Coronel" equipped with intermediate wave direction finding apparatus were ordered to take bearings on the convoy telephony traffic. Submarine U "567" then reported at 0730 from AL 4274 a doubtful bearing of 284 degrees true. This was the only report received concerning the convoy.

At 0930 the radio guardship of the expected HX convoy was located in AL 1160 or AL 25. On the basis of this report it must be presumed that the convoy passed north of the line and is now already east of it.

This operation again proves that without air reconnaissance no successes can be achieved.

As by the evening the convoy was no longer likely to arrive Group "Coronel" was dissolved. The boats sailed in two groups, one to the northwest and one to the southwest. Group "Coronel I" consisting of nine boats has been ordered to occupy the patrol line from AK 2286 to 2831 as from 0000 on 11 Dec., while Group "Coronel II" consisting of ten boats is to occupy the patrol line from AK 6815 to 9569.

On 13 Dec. it is intended to operate against either one of the convoys ON or HX after previous air reconnaissance; for this the two groups will go into action either together or separately, depending on the results of the air reconnaissance.

Submarine "230" reported from CH 8111 that he had cleared the Straits of Gibraltar successfully.

No reports from the Indian Ocean.

VI. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

No special air activity on either side.

2. German Reich Territory:

No enemy activity was observed.

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3. Mediterranean Area:

Our Air Force carried out reconnaissance.

In the noon hours the enemy attacked the harbor and city of Ancona, the railway stations of Orte, Civitavecchia, and Aquila, northeast of Rome. At the latter station seven ammunition cars were set on fire; also a train with British prisoners was badly hit.

The enemy attacked the airfields of Tatoi and Eleusis in the area of Air Force Command Southeast. During these attacks a new type of Lightning was observed, whose performance is superior to that of the BF 109, even at high altitudes. Three of our planes were destroyed on the two airfields, eight further planes were heavily damaged. Three of the attacking planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery.

Nineteen reconnaissance planes were observed over the Aegean area by day.

By night the airfields of Iraklion and Civitavecchia were attacked. Ten planes were observed supplying partisans in the Balkans.

4. Norway:

A Beaufighter was shot down by two FW 190's in the area of Sognefjord.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area of the Naval Group, West:

Enemy Situation:

According to reports from the Intelligence Division the Italian warships in the harbor of Mahon have been finally interned. Dispersal of the crews is in progress.

Own Situation:

Two laden landing craft left Toulon for Italy.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

According to photographic reconnaissance there were 10 small naval units in the harbor of Maddalena, probably

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gun - and torpedo PT boats, two small auxiliary naval vessels, one floating dock and other small craft.

Three freighters were sighted in Cagliari; ten vessels, probably LCM's, course southeast, and 20 landing craft, course northeast, were sighted off the Sangro outlet.

Own Situation:

Submarine "616" sank two steamers 25 miles north-north-east of Cape Bougaroni at 0300, a third one was left burning (altogether about 24,000 BRT).

The minelaying operation "Ulan" was broken off during the night of 7 Dec. because of unfavorable weather conditions.

The Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean suggested that in order to relieve the shortage of large ships in the Aegean and Black Sea areas, these fast French combined passenger freighters available, capable of 16-20 knots, should try independently to break through the Straits of Sicily from the western Mediterranean.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff considers the prospect of success only slight. The German Naval Command, Italy has been ordered to investigate the matter and to report what the possibilities are for such an operation, and very particularly, what information there is on the routes used by the British in the narrow area between the Straits of Sicily and Tripolis and what course could be followed by blockade runners.

Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has confirmed the closing down of the Office of Chief, Supply and Transport, Italy through the German Naval Command, Italy, but ordered the latter to cancel the order to disband the 2nd Landing Division immediately. (See Telegram 1012)

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

On 7 Dec. at 1000 the steamer MARBLANCO struck a mine in the Srednje Channel (south of Zara), probably a standard mine.

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The ship put in to Zara at 1400. The channel has been closed because of suspected mines.

Part of the staff of the Naval Shore Command, Dalmatia was transferred to Mostar to facilitate the necessary co-operation with the 5th SS Mountain Army Corps. At 0800 the hospital ship GRADISCA was sailing off Corfu on her way from Suda to Trieste.

Group South reports that the Panzer Army High Command 2 will be re-formed for mopping up operations on the south Dalmatian islands. A new sequence has been worked out for the occupation of the islands. So that our naval forces will not be subjected to enemy air raids for too long a period and so that our air forces will be able to operate from Dalmatia the operation will commence (keyword "Herbstgewitter II") with the capture of Corcula, then Hvar, Brac and Solta. The entire operation will be directed by the Corps Headquarters 5th SS Mountain Army Corps. The operation will commence on 14 Dec. at the latest. The commanding Admiral, Adriatic is taking part in the preparation of the plan at Mostar.

Group South considers that the operation must be carried out as soon as possible in order to prevent further reinforcement of the enemy positions; it takes, however, for granted that the plan of the Panzer Army High Command was based on the same view. The Group feels that this newly established Armed Forces Command post will guarantee smooth co-operation.

For teletype as per I/Skl 3619/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

Group South also reports that according to the incomplete data so far available sea transport performances in the area of Admiral, Adriatic amounted to 11,864 tons during the month of November 1943. Of this 10,440 tons were transported in southern direction. Four steamers, totalling 6,500 tons, four motor coasters, and one tug were lost. Four steamers and one motor coaster was damaged.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 7 Dec. at 2045 one enemy plane was seen to drop three mines off Naxos harbor. On 8 Dec. three mines were cleared by a coastal defense boat. At about noon on 8 Dec. naval anti-aircraft artillery shot down too of 50 four-engined bombers which attacked the airfield at Eleusis. During the night of 7 Dec. single planes bombed the convoy containing the steamer LEDA in Vathi without success. A convoy sailing from Samos to Piraeus sighted several submarines. At 0923

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air escort reported two torpedo misses fired at LEDA north-east of Stenopas. A few bombs fell into the discharge swell.

On 7 Dec. our air reconnaissance sighted a freighter and two smaller naval vessels in the Limasol roadstead (Cyprus).

Own Situation:

The submarine hunt northeast of Stenopas was broken off at 1130 having run out of depth charges. The steamer LEDA escorted by torpedo boats TA "15", "16" and motor minesweepers R "211" with 5,400 Italian prisoners of war put in to Piraeus at 1715. About 250 men of the 3rd company, 1st Brandenburg Regiment were shipped aboard the two torpedo boats.

Group South reported sea transport performances in the Aegean Sea for the month of November 1943; altogether 49,013 tons as against 59,404 in October. The decrease is due to escort difficulties, losses of steamers and the fact that merchant ships were engaged on operational duties. Total losses three steamers (3,973 BRT) and nine auxiliary sailing vessels. For details see Telegram 2001.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring the destroyer G was probably lying in her base on the north coast of the Caucasus.

Six submarines were detected at sea.

Own Situation:

Our motor minesweepers operating in the patrol line in the south part of the Straits of Kerch during the night of 7 Dec. came into contact with a Russian gun boat which withdrew to the east. Motor minesweeper R "196" is out of action for a short while as a result of a hit in the fuel tank. While returning to base mine clearance vessels were machine-gunned off Cape Taschaude by two enemy fighter planes without damage. Naval landing craft did not sight enemy objectives during the same night despite good visibility.

Kamysh Burun was subjected to heavy artillery fire from 1230 to 1540. No operations by PT boats or motor minesweepers on account of unfavorable weather conditions.

On 5 Dec. it is reported that a lighter was completely lost after running aground in the Otchekov channel.

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The minelaying task west of Eupatoria was carried out as planned.

Commander, Convoys, Black Sea intends to have the steamer BALKAN sail to the Aegean Sea by way of the Bosphorus on about 11 Dec.

On orders from Group South the steamer SONJA, SCHIAFINO and HARDIAN (totalling 6,000 BRT) will be transferred from the Aegean to the Black Sea. Group South considers further withdrawal of ships from the Aegean out of the question and thinks that the transport demands made by the Army for supply of the Crimea can be fulfilled with the shipping already provided, including a small number in reserve in case of losses.

Group South reports that the sea transport performances in the Black Sea for November 1943 amount altogether to 99,316 tons as against 1113,354 for October. The decrease is due to the breakdown of the Kerch traffic and escort difficulties. 46,054 tons of the total sum were transported from the ports on the west coast to the Dnjepr and Crimea while 43,893 tons were transported from the Crimea and Dnjepr to the western ports. Three steamers totalling 9,500 BRT, one tug and two lighters were lost.

According to a report from the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Operations Staff, Navy, the 4th Air Force has taken the necessary measures to see that the Rumanians provide fighter escort for convoys as previously. The 1st Air Force Corps has been ordered to attach the airfield at Skadovsk continuously. During the last few days no attacks were carried out on account of unfavorable weather conditions. As a result of the unusually tense situation at Army Group South none of our own fighters can be provided for escort purposes. Group South congratulated Admiral, Black Sea on the elimination of the Eltigen beachhead as an outstanding success, and considered that the cutting of supplies of men and material through the Straits of Kerch was decisive in attaining it. The tenacious blockade carried out by naval landing craft, motor minesweepers and PT boats despite all losses, and supported by the coastal batteries, deserve special acknowledgement considering the tense situation in the Black Sea and the strong enemy resistance on land, at sea and in the air.

The Naval Staff cannot but join in this acknowledgement from Group South. In answer to an inquiry Admiral, Black Sea reports via Group South that during the operations off Eltigen the naval forces were commanded by Admiral, Black Sea personally. During the operation the group leader of the naval landing craft, Lt. (J. G.) Bastian, and the Commander of the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, Captain Klassmann particularly distinguished themselves. Meanwhile Lt. Bastian is missing after his assault boat capsized while rendering assistance to a landing craft which had run aground.

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The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) has been informed.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Naval Attache Tokyo reports:

" An official report just received from the Japanese Naval Staff on the fighting in the area of the Marshall and Gilbert Islands gives the following picture:

I. During the period between 19 and 27 Nov. American troops landed on the Gilbert Islands, Makin and Tarawa. The landings were supported by several groups of Warships. The landing operation was partly supported by a bombardment of the coast, after several heavy air attacks on Japanese bases had been carried out. Three battleships, approximately eight carriers and numerous cruisers and destroyers were employed by the enemy. The Japanese did not employ any naval forces, except submarines. With the exception of the sinking of one carrier all the successes reported were achieved by the naval air force. Between 19 and 27 Nov. the Japanese reported having sunk the following:

six carriers, three cruisers and one destroyer.

A further carrier was sunk by a submarine. (Until now the only loss which had been confirmed by the Americans) It was the newly built carrier LISCOMB BAY, which was probably a merchant ship originally and converted into a carrier. According to Japanese radio monitoring three of the aircraft carriers which had taken part in the battle were no longer being called. In addition to auxiliary carriers the following types were recognized - SARATOGA, YORKTOWN and COWPENS, It seems that in spite of the Japanese defensive successes the landings on the islands of Makin and Tarawa were successful.

2. So far only press reports are available on the 6th air battle near Bougainville according to which three carriers, one battleship or large cruiser and one cruiser were sunk.

3. On 5 Dec. the Japanese bases on the Marshall Islands were again attacked; in the course of the defense a medium carrier and a large cruiser were sunk.

4. Summing up, Tokoyo announced that during the period from 27 Oct. to 3 Dec. 5 battleships, 8 carriers, 7 large cruisers, 9 cruisers, 4 large destroyers, 8 destroyers

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and various transports were sunk. Japanese losses were two destroyers and 138 planes.

5. According to a report from Allied headquarters in the southwest Pacific Japanese positions on New Guinea, Bougainville, Choiseul and Rabaul are being continuously attacked.

6. In a summary on the fighting since the declaration of war up to the present the Imperial Japanese Headquarters lists the following successes:

Sunk: 16 battleships
18 carriers
27 cruisers
92 destroyers
79 submarines and more than
100 unidentified ships.

Shot down: 5,158 enemy planes.

Japanese losses during the same period:

1 battleship
3 carriers
3 cruisers
23 destroyers
11 submarines
various smaller craft and
1,253 planes.

Items of Political Importance.

According to a Swedish report from Istanbul, it is alleged that Turkey has been at the highest degree of readiness since 7 Dec. According to United Press one million reservists are to be called to the colors this month. Reuter believes that Turkish fears regarding Russian expansionist policy have been allayed and that an additional agreement to the Turko - British treaty of 1939 has been concluded. The United States press does not doubt that at Cairo Inoenu granted the use of Turkish air bases and the right of passage through the straits, in return for the assurance of Anglo-American assistance in case of a German attack. An official Turkish statement is expected within the next few days.

In the presence of press representatives Smuts declared in Cairo that on the basis of the recent conference the United Nations are now united in their aims. However, there was still a gignatic struggle ahead. He hoped that this would be the last war Christmas. The "Old Order" was buried in the western desert. An unprecedented revolution was taking place in the history of humanity.

Answering an inquiry in the House of Commons the British Government stated that the speech delivered by Smuts on 25 Nov. was not official, but nevertheless a valuable controbution to the discussion of post-war problems.

As regards British relations with those at present in authority in Yugoslavia the Deputy Foreign Minister declared in the Hoose of Commons that British policy aimed at supporting all forces in that country which offered resistance to Germany. For the time being Tito's partisans would receive greater support than Mihailovich, because they were bearing the brunt of the fighting.

The French Rear Admiral Godefroy, the former Commander in Chief of the Alexandria Fleet, and Michelier, the leader of French fleet resistance to the Anglo-American landing at Casablanca in November 1942, were pensioned off by the "Liberation Committee".

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.I. Quartermaster General, Naval Staff.

a. According to informttion from the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Construction Division the first of the three PT boats to be transferred to the Black Sea by way of the Danube River will be ready for action in the Black Sea in mid-January. Water levels in the Danube River have improved.

b. The new estimates for small arms and machine-gun ammunition have been drawn up on the basis of army figures.

II. a. Chief, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch reports on the number of Italian officers and soldiers employed with German units in the area of the German Naval Command, Italy (see War Diary 8 Dec).

To this the Chief, Naval Staff remarks: "There are no longer any independent Italian Armed Forces." We only allowed Captain Borghese to lead a unit under a new Italian flag within the command of the German Naval Command, Italy.

Mussolini's efforts to achieve independent Armed Forces should not be encouraged because we must guard against the formation of units we might not be able to control.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff thought it expedient to report these fears to the Armed Forces High Command. The Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff will take further action.

b. Further report from the Organization & Mobilization Br. Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff with regard to the request made by the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command, Norway for the appointment of Port Commanders. The request was occasioned by the intention of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway to establish a Fortification Command. A similar request in connection with France was at the time refused by the Commander in Chief, Navy. In the case of Norway too the Naval Staff is in favor of a refusal.

The Chief, Naval Staff decided to this effect.

III. Deputy Chief, Naval Intelligence Division.

It is alleged that 80,000 landing craft are being built in the U. S. Twenty-five thousand landing craft are already completed. It is said that these craft are to be employed in the offensive against Japan. For some time the building of landing craft has taken priority over all other construction.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

IV. Army Situation:

On the northern front in the Crimea the large-scale enemy attack is awaited with certain calm. The situation would become serious only in case of large-scale enemy landings.

At the focal point of the battle, in Kremenchug the situation is considered critical, Our attack in the Zhitomir area resulted in further successes.

On the Italian front the hard fighting on the northern and southern wing of the Bernhard position is continuing with unabated ferocity. The situation is not alarming, as serious encircling landings are not expected.

V. Report of Naval Staff, Chief of Operations Branch.

Group West requests a decision as to whether from now on the remote-reconnaissance carried out by Air Commander, Atlantic will be exclusively for blockade-runners. The planes need about eight days for overhauling.

The Chief, Naval Staff has decided that on account of the submarine operation to be carried out against convoys on 13 and 14 Dec. the planes of the Air Commander, Atlantic will not be available until 15 Dec.

Group West was informed to this effect by teletype 1/Skl I k 3612/43 Gkdos. Chfs.

VI. The Chief, Naval Staff has requested Naval Staff to take over the question of the preparation of planes for military and nautical training with the 20th Submarine Flotilla for re-training of naval officers - as there have been difficulties until now.

The Chief, Naval Staff also announced that in agreement with Reichs Minister Speer, Professor Kopfmuehler has been appointed leader of the physio-scientific research staff of the High Command, Navy.

Finally the Chief, Naval Staff has ordered that the question of construction blue-prints for monitors - without detriment to the conversion of tugs already planned - is to be discussed at once with the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Construction Division.

Special Items.

I. On 8 Dec. a discussion on problems of naval armament production took place in the Shell Building between the Chiefs of the technical departments with their departmental heads and the representatives of Reichs Minister Speer. Among others the following items were discussed: emergency program for communications equipment of submarines, PT boats and submarine-chasers under the cover name "Seerose", state of naval armament production; fears of the High Command, Navy regarding the employment situation, special assignment III reductions and allotments for naval production and offices; consequences of the action taken on special assignment III.

Allotment of raw material for naval tasks in the first quarter of 1944. State of raw material allocation. Necessity to make adjustments within the total naval allocation in agreement with the High Command, Navy in case reductions are

necessary. Several questions of equipment in short supply (3 cm automatic mechanism and mountings for submarines type XXI and PT boats after the breakdown of the Borsig plant at Tegel. Production of 3.7 cm ammunition for submarines and ships).

II. According to a report from the Naval Construction Division to the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division it is necessary that a decision regarding the dockyard period of the destroyers Z "23" and "24" should be made six weeks in advance by Operations Division, Naval Staff. This notice is necessary because of the time needed for the preparation of births, spare auxiliary engines, and other spare parts, as well as equipment and supplies.

III. Confidential report No. 49/43 contains a summary of enemy information gained from radio deciphering and radio monitoring for period 22 Nov. to 5 Dec. 1943.

Note: for PQ convoy see page 4/5.

Situation 9 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Group West reports:

"In order to conceal the time of departure of the blockade-runners, these as well as a few other ships on the west coast of France will be kept moving between the various harbors or anchorages.

For this purpose the ships involved have received the following cover names:

1. Tannenfels - Taunus
2. Pietro Orseolo - Eifel
3. Himalaya - Spessart
4. Recum - Solling
5. Nordmeer - Hundsrueck
6. Schwarzes Meer - Odenwald
7. Rastenburg - Tatra
8. Ida - Lausitz.

The real names of the ships and the international recognition signals will not be used any longer. The meaning of the cover names is restricted to the smallest possible circle of persons.

It is also requested that only these cover names be used in the communications traffic with Group West".

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The Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare and the Counter Intelligence Section, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command were informed to this effect by the Operations Division, Naval Staff.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Lively reconnaissance was observed on the part of the 19th Group. The area of operations was not detected. Three planes belonging to the Azores Squadrons were located on operations.

In the course of the day seven locations of British vessels were reported in the rendezvous area.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Six submarines were escorted out and three submarines were escorted in. For the rest nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The OSTFRIESLAND was escorted to the Hook of Holland as planned. Motor minesweepers broke off minesweeping operations because of heavy seas. Otherwise the escort service and mineclearance was carried out according to plan. One ELM/J was cleared north of Schiermonikoog.

The convoy "1193" Hook-Elbe, consisting of six steamers and six escort vessels, put out to sea in easterly direction at 1800.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Thirteen planes were located over the North Sea, and 18 planes north of the Shetland Islands in the afternoon.

At 0357 the battery at Corsnaes fired five rounds at an unknown flat bottomed craft which was withdrawing. At 0509 the naval radio station at Marstein reported two PT boats sailing from the southeast to the west. It was probably one of these PT boats which was shelled by the Corsnaes battery.

At 1050 an enemy plane was reported north of Bergen.

Own Situation:

Nine further miens, Russian Type M 831, were cut north of the Petsamo approaches.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from the Consulate General in Goeteborg the PT boat GAY CORSAER entered the harbor of Lysekil on 6 Dec. and left again the same day. It is alleged the boat disembarked sailors for the DICTO and the LIONEL. The PT boat HOPEWELL is said to have not yet returned to Great Britain. It is presumed she is somewhere in the skerries. The DICTO and LIONEL as well as the RAPID II are said to be lying in Brofjord ready to sail.

No special events to report from the area of Commander, Minesweepers, East and Admiral, Baltic Countries.

2. Own Situation:

No special events were reported from the Baltic Sea Entrances. F 203 struck a mine northwest of Kolberg and sustained damage. One ELM/J was cleared in Danzig Bay.

During the night of 8 Dec. a fire broke out in the naval laundry at Libau probably due to arson, causing moderate damage.

Special Items:

From a letter from Group North/Fleet addressed to the Naval Command, East, the latter learned that a reinforcement of the Skagerrak minefields is intended. The Naval Command points out that until now the Skagerrak minefields came under the command of Naval Command, East.

In reference to this the Naval Staff made the following statement to Naval Command, East, with copy to Group North/Fleet:

I. Naval Command, East is still responsible for the mine-field planning of the Skaggerak, without prejudice to the superior responsibility of Group North/Fleet for the protection of the Danish area as a whole, in accordance with the Fuehrer Directive No. 51.

2. The mines and anti-sweeping devices in question are last reserves which were taken away from other theaters of war for the defense of the Danish area in accordance with the Fuehrer Directive 51. These means will only be employed for further reinforcement of the

- a. Northwest Wall
- b. Skaggerrak minefields.

3. They will be employed in the Northwest Wall only if further gaps occur which will enable the enemy to break through. Naval Staff is of the opinion that the mine-defense of the Danish area - aside from local protection of the harbors of Esbjerg and Tybornoen by ground mines - must concentrate on the reinforcement of the Skaggerrak minefield-system against enemy penetration to the harbors of eastern Jutland. For this purpose the necessary mine material will be given top priority after the mining commitments in the Channel and Gulf of Finland. The allocation is, however, dependent on the actual number of mines available.

4. If possible it is intended to retain the 500 mines, then mentioned as last reserves, until the winter storms are over.

V. Merchant Shipping.

In a brief report No. 14/43 the Intelligence Division, Foreign Armies, Naval Staff reports on the building of special ships in the United States for the transport of war gas; the handing over of two Liberty ships by the United States to the Greek Government; saving of shipping space by use of dried products which only require one sixth of the space formerly required; withdrawal of all men liable for military service from Spain and Portugal or Oran and other enemy countries by enemy ships.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

Nothing to report.

VII. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

Nothing to report.

2. German Reich Territory:

No enemy planes entered German Reich Territory either by day or by night.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our Air Force carried out reconnaissance.

About 800 enemy planes were operating in the front line area of the 2nd Air Force, concentrating on both wings. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down eight enemy planes, while one further plane was shot down by our fighters. At 0955 PT boats in the Piomino Straits were unsuccessfully attacked by three Spitfires. At about noon 20 planes attacked the airfield at Guidonia. Our anti-aircraft artillery forces them to retreat and to return without having dropped any bombs. A further attack was directed against the city and harbor of Porto St. Stefano. The harbor was heavily damaged. Fifty six planes attacked Giulianova, south of Ancona.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast 18 enemy planes carried out armed reconnaissance in the eastern Adriatic Sea. Ten enemy planes were observed over the Aegean Sea by day, during the night only a few enemy planes penetrated this area.

4. Eastern Front:

The 5th Air Force ordered 40 planes into operation. A thorough reconnaissance of the Faeroes did not result in any tactical observations. For details see Daily situation.

The search for enemy PT boats in the Swedish skerries achieved no results.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

On 8 Dec. four destroyers left Gibraltar for the Atlantic, while on 9 Dec. a cruiser of the CAIRO class left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean. The LORRAINE was sighted at sea off Oran during daylight on 2 Dec.

Own Situation:

Seven vessels sailing in four convoys were escorted by ten escort vessels off the south coast of France.

The steamer VIRGILIO put in to Toulon at 1020.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance three troop transports were sailing 20 miles west of the northern tip of Sardinia, course 260 degrees, at 1507.

At noon on 8 Dec. 20 vessels, probably landing craft, were reported off Termoli, course northwest. According to radio monitoring a formation was sailing in the vicinity of Algiers at 1234 on 9 Dec. with air alert.

Own Situation:

At 1955 submarine U "616" fired a Zaunkoenig torpedo at the destroyer 18 miles north of the Philippines. After 12 minutes 52 seconds an explosion and noises of sinking were heard. The boat is on return passage to Toulon.

During the night of 8 Dec. minelaying task was carried out by torpedo boats TA "23" and TA "24" according to plan. While approaching their area of operations the boats came into contact with enemy PT boats. PT boats carried out the minelaying task "Ulan" off the enemy coast in the Gulf of Gaeta as planned. Two spitfires attacked the boats on the morning of 9 Dec. One of the attacking planes was shot down.

The minelayer DWARSLAEUFER and four minesweeping vessels are proceeding from La Spezia to Elbe for execution of minelaying operation.

Considerable damage was caused in the harbor of Civitavecchia in the course of an enemy attack at noon on 8 Dec. One water tanker was sunk. The approaches are completely blocked. The harbor can only be used by peniches (berges) and naval landing craft.

Five peniches and two auxiliary sailing vessels were lost as a result of the air attack on St. Stefano at noon on 9 Dec. A naval landing craft laden with mines was hit by a bomb forward. The harbor is blocked by sunken ships.

The German Naval Command, Italy reported to the Shipping and Transport Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, that the Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas, Out-Station Trieste expects that the supply to the east coast of Italy will amount to only 8,000 tons monthly as against the Army's demand for 20,000 tons. These 8,000 tons are to be made available as

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far as shipping is concerned. Quartermaster, Naval Staff has informed the Quartermaster, Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command of this discrepancy.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

The supply ship ISTO was repeatedly strafed by machine-guns while sailing from Zara to Karolobag. On 7 Dec. an auxiliary sailing vessel sighted a submarine while on her way to Split.

In the course of an attempt by the Commander 11th Escort Flotilla to reach Metkovic from Split in a motor boat, it was observed that the passage to the east of Brac was barred by an enemy guard vessel. The motor boat was fired on from both coasts. A break-through was impossible.'

Torpedo boats TA "21" and TA "20" are returning to Trieste. It is impossible for the GRADISCA to take off the wounded from Trieste because the bridge east of Monfalcone was destroyed during the night of 6 Dec. Therefore the hospital ship was ordered to alter her course and is now heading for Venice.

b. Aegean Sea:

During an enemy air attack on Eleusis at noon on 8 Dec. six standard mines were found on land. In the course of this attack a 4-engined bomber was shot down by a coastal defense boat. No damage was reported after the attack on Porto Lago the same morning. On the evening of 8 Dec. 20 enemy planes, including 6-8 minelaying planes were sighted over Iraklion. The harbor and entrance were closed because of suspected mines. For the time being the following harbors and sea areas are closed because of suspected ground mines: the harbors and approaches to Syra and Iraklion, the passage through Paros and Naxos Bay, as well as the eastern part of Eleusis Bay.

On 9 Dec. what was presumed to be a submarine was sighted southwest of Cerigotto.

c. Black Sea:

Naval landing craft engaged on patrol of Kerch Bay during the night of 8 Dec. did not come into contact with the enemy. During the night of 8 Dec. five naval landing craft and three motor minesweepers are scheduled for operations. At 1710 naval landing craft off Kerch Bay were unsuccessfully attacked with torpedoes by two PT boats. A naval landing craft was sunk by an enemy submarine 15 miles west of Ak Metchet at 1010. Another naval landing craft was able to evade a second surface runner.

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In the morning submarine U "20" put in to Constanta after enemy patrol.

One standard mine was cleared off Cape Tarchankutsk.

With regard to the land situation it is reported that part of the garrison in the Eltigen beachhead penetrated in a northern direction as far as Kerch. The group comprising about 800 men, was encircled in the southern part of the town. Under cover of darkness and despite our barrage the enemy succeeded in landing from five small boats 500 m south of Kerch.

LX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

On 8 Dec. the Turkish Foreign Minister, speaking to Turkish and Allied press representatives, emphasized that Turkish foreign policy remained fundamentally unchanged. Menemencoglu denied that the suggested close cooperation with the Allies would lead Turkey into the war.

According to Reuter no documents were signed at Cairo.

The British press states that the establishment of General Marshall's headquarters in London must be considered an immediate result of the Teheran Conference.

In a new joint declaration made by Churchill and Roosevelt regarding submarine warfare it was stated that in November 1943 German submarines sank less merchantmen than ever before since May 1940. The protection of convoys from the Azores had proved a success, the number of German submarines sunk during the month of November being higher than that of the merchantmen sunk during the same period.

According to Reuter 164 merchantmen totalling 1,692,763 tdw were built in the United States during the month of November 1943.

The strength of Tito's regular forces is estimated at 200,000 men. Tito receives British and American support, the latter under lend-lease.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff has ordered the Bureau of Naval Ordnance Division Naval Armament to carry out an investigation regarding development of flat trajectory firing with torpedoes in view of the increasing employment of small craft.

II. Report of the Submarine Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff:

I. According to the new plan two submarine pens will be built in Slatonica. One pen for large boats Types VII C and XXI respectively, with three jetties and three dry docks and a second one for small boats (Type XXIII), with nine jetties and nine dry docks. Accommodation also for six large boats. Clearance measurements of a pen about 32 x 220 meters.

2. Former deadlines for the completion of the submarine bunker at Marseille.

- I. Building section: August 1943
2. Building Section: Spring 1944

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In the course of the air raid on 1 Dec. the surrounding steel sheet pilings and pumping installations suffered considerable damage, thereby delaying the deadline by eight weeks. A further delay will be caused by constructional difficulties in the sinking of the subsoil water. Group West therefore requests that construction be simplified and asks whether the installation can be designed for Type VII C or whether some jetties may be built for small types (Type XXIII) as well. This would facilitate excavation and pumping installation considerably, and make it possible to speed up the completion of the jetties.

In a Highly Restricted Circle:

III. Report from Minesweeping Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff on foreshore minefields in the western area in accordance with the discussion on the matter contained in War Diary on 6 Dec. The Chief of Naval Staff has approved the instructions to be sent to Group West and intends to avail himself of the next opportunity to warn the Fuehrer in a general way against overestimation of the effectiveness of minefields.

IV. Report from the Naval Air and Air Force Liaison Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff:

a. The Reich Minister for Aviation and Commander in Chief of the Air Force have submitted a plan for the establishment of an "Office of General of the Air Force, Navy" for examination. The Reich Marshal and Commander in Chief of the Air Force requested the liquidation of the following offices on 22 Nov.:

General of the Air Force attached to the High Command, Navy;

Inspector with the General of the Air Force attached to the High Command, Navy;

Aerial Mines Inspectorate and

Air Inspectorate 16 (Sea Rescue Inspectorate).

An amalgamation of the offices in the suggested form can only be welcomed.

The Chief, Naval Staff approved the plan as suggested. The Reich Minister for Aviation and Commander in Chief, Air Force will be informed by the Naval Staff, Operations Division accordingly.

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b. Finally Naval Air and Air Force, Liaison Section gave an exhaustive survey of the air situation as a whole as on 1 Dec. For memorandum of the report see records of 1/Skl I L, 2. Attention is drawn to the statements regarding enemy air navigation which seems to have attained a remarkably high level.

V. Army Situation:

The fierce defensive fighting concentrated around Kremen Chug continues. The enemy has crossed the railway to Krivoirog. Our troops reached the railroad from Kiev to Korosten north of Zhitomir and have blown it up.

The situation as a whole continues tense.

VI. The Chief, Naval Staff approved the award of the Iron Cross to members of the crew of the MICHEL as proposed by the Operations Division, Naval Staff.

VII. Report from Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff:

a. The Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army General Staff transitted for information an evaluation of the situation in the Crimea via Commanding General, Army Group A. In this report General Von Kleist states:

"1. The 17th Army cannot without reinforcement, defend the Crimea indefinitely. It must be reinforced by at least 2 divisions at full battle-strength.

2. The supply situation will not permit such a reinforcement. It is already difficult, since the enemy air forces and submarines are steadily reducing the transport capacity. It may be sufficient for the present military forces for some time yet, but certainly not if the forces are increased.

3. On this account therefore it will be necessary either to establish permanent land communications with the 17th Army or, if there are not sufficient forces for this, to evacuate the Crimea.

After thorough examination it has been decided evacuation by sea is impossible even with the assistance of air transport. If all heavy weapons, gear, motor vehicles and horses were abandoned, it would still take more than a month to evacuate the troops alone. Such a long operation would be subjected to a very heavy attacks from land, sea and air, and these could under no circumstances be countered with the forces available.

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Thus there remains only evacuation of the Crimea by land by means of a break-through on the Perekop front. Certainly, this means running a risk, and it is impossible to foresee whether we shall succeed in evacuating all forces from the Crimea, but it should be practicable if given certain more exact data."

For copy of the report as per 1/Skl 3630/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

The Naval Staff can only express in so far as the question of securing supplies and duration of the evacuation is concerned. From the statements already made it must be concluded that Army Group A considers it possible to hold the Crimea only if two further divisions are brought up as reinforcement. If it were not the case that it would be impossible to supply the peninsula if the forces there are increased, there would arise the further difficulty as to whether the reinforcements are in fact available and could be brought up in time. According to the view of the Naval Staff, the decision regarding the evacuation should not be made to depend entirely on the supply question.

b. The Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army High Command also submitted for information an evaluation of the situation made by the Army Quartermaster General; the figures mentioned in the report are obviously post-dated, thereby clearly revealing the tendency to prepare the tendency to prepare the evacuation order. An examination of the details contained in the report is being made.

The Chief of the Naval Staff has ordered the Navy to go through all the supply possibilities once more and submit the report to the Army since it is by them the final decision will be made.

Group South therefore received the following instructions:

"Cable attitude to the report made by the Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army High Command (Army General Staff) 183/43 Gkdos. Chfs. dated 6 Dec. by evening of 11 Dec.

In case the report has not yet been received the following questions are to be answered in advance by teletype:

1. What is the daily and monthly transport capacity at present?

2. What capacity can be expected for the next few months until April 1944, taking into account:

a. The available transport space (including naval landing craft and its probable development;

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b. Possible provision of convoy escort.

3. What military measures would be needed as pre-requisite for 2)b) ?

4. Would the employment of the naval forces until now operating in the Straits of Kerch improve the escort situation?"

Special Items.

I. With regard to the matter discussed above, during the day the following report was received from Group South in the form of a summary, after a telephone discussion between the Chief, Shipping and Transport Branch, Quartermaster Division and Chief of Staff, Group South:

"I. Transshipment capacity of the Crimean harbors:

Sevastopol: 1,500 tons. This number can be raised to 2,000 tons daily by increasing the railroad capacity and number of trucks available.

Feodosia: 1,000 tons daily. No increase possible.

Yalta: 600 tons daily. No increase possible.

Eupatoria: 400 tons daily, by small ships only, after completion of the loading jetty.

Ak Metchet: 3-400 tons daily by ferry barges only. After the laying of a narrow-gauge field railway and the completion of a second bridge (construction of which has not yet begun) 1,000 tons daily.

These figures can only be attained providing there is a sufficient number of workers, as well as of trucks and cars for goods transport back and forth.

2. In the Black Sea the following amounts can be transported each month with the shipping space at present available:

From Odessa to Sevastopol 24,400 tons

From Constanta to Sevastopol a. freight 16,500 tons
b. fuel 12,400 tons

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from the Danube to Odessa 9,000 tons monthly
from Odessa to Nicholajev 30,000 tons monthly.

The above numbers presuppose favorable weather conditions, continuous convoy service and nor further losses; that is, they are only theoretical."

II. On 6 Dec. the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) transmitted for information a copy of a review of the situation issued by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southwest dated 4 Dec.

For copy as per Naval Staff 3603/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV. The Naval Staff has nothing to add to the report, since it is not directly concerned.

III. For copies of the telegrams exchanged between the Commander of the 17th Army, General Jaenecke, and the Commander in Chief, Navy on the occasion of the elimination of the Eltigen bridgehead, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a under 1/Skl 51472/43 geh.

IV. The Naval Attache Tokyo in his position as Armed Forces Attache transmitted a review of the situation by the Japanese Naval Staff and his own review of the air situation and situation at sea, in the form of a detailed and conclusive telegram to the Armed Forces High Command, Foreign Countries, Operations Division, Naval Staff and to the High Command, Army.

For copy of the telegram as per 1/Skl 3656/43 Gkdos. Chfs., see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

V. Group West again opposed the plan of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West to engage the batteries "Todt" and "Lindemann" in long-range shelling of the south coast of England, as part of the special operations planned.

For copy as per 1/Skl 3640/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIb.

The Group has requested that the cancellation of such a plan be effected through the Armed Forces High Command, or the Fuehrer, if necessary.

VI. On the basis of a report from the Naval Armament Inspectorate on the amounts of chrome to be imported from southeastern Europe and Turkey, the Naval Staff learned from the Naval Armament Inspectorate that the imports are to be carried out exclusively over land.

VII. For a memorandum on the discussion between the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff and the Chief of Staff, Group North/Fleet on 10 Dec.

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concerning Operations Division, Group North, 10th Italian PT Boat Flotilla and the Italian Navy, see under c/Skl 3674/43 Gkdos. Chfs. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

VIII. In the report on the Enemy Situation No. 23/43 of 5 Dec. the Naval Staff reports among other things on the state of mercantile warfare. For copy as per l/Skl 41844/43 Gkdos. see records of 3/Skl "Information on Enemy Situation".

IX. In reply to the question from the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff regarding anti-aircraft protection for the command post Bismarck the Commander in Chief, Air Force Operations Staff replied that for the time being no anti-aircraft forces can be detailed to Eberswalde because there is only a limited number of mobile anti-aircraft forces available within the German Reich territory.

Situation 10 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The ALSTERUFER and the OSORNO received instructions for entering of the Bay of Biscay by radiogram in special code. The OSORNO will be picked up by destroyers at 1000 on 24 Dec., and the ALSTERUFER at 1000 on 28 Dec. at Point Cita. Point Cita is situated 30 minutes further north and 06 degrees further east than the reference points adrift and Ozean, both of which are known to the two blockade-runners. For copy of the orders as per l/Skl i k 3645, 3646, 3647 and 3648/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informs Submarine Division, Naval Staff that according to information received from the Japanese Naval Attache on 5 Dec. the FLIEDER entered a Japanese base whose name was not mentioned in the report.

The Submarine Division is likewise informed of a report from the Japanese Naval Attache according to which the Japanese Naval Staff intends to send a substitute for the TANNE to Europe which is due to leave Japan in March 1944.

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According to latest report the KIEFER is scheduled to leave the Japanese southern area in mid-December; accordingly her arrival in Europe is to be expected about the beginning or middle of February. The Japanese Naval Attache asked if up-to-date radar gear could be handed over to the KIEFER at sea by one of our submarines.

With regard to the embarkation of Italians on the blockade-runners the Naval Attache, Tokyo reports as cogent reasons that the Japanese refused to look after the Italians and demanded that they should be transported from Singapore as soon as possible; furthermore, Singapore is at present occupied by 600 German soldiers so that it was impossible for the over-worked navy office there either to find work or accommodation for the 140 Italians.

The Naval Staff asks the Bureau of Naval Administration, Bureau of Naval Armament to see that the Parent Naval Units and the Air Force Parent Unit inform the next-of-kin of the members of the crew of the auxiliary cruiser ship "28" officially, after they have been preliminarily informed by the Transportation Office of Supply and Armed Forces, Overseas. The secrecy ordered in the preliminary information is to be maintained. The next-of-kin are to be instructed to direct all inquiries either to the Parent Naval Unit or to the transportation Office or the Armed Forces, Overseas. The number of rescued totals 116.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty six planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay.

One U. S. vessel was detected in AL 8144 at 0926 and another in AL 6765 at 2025; single British vessels were detected in BE 8293 at 1008, in AM 5190 at 1136 and in BE 3796 at 1246.

At 0910 our air reconnaissance sighted a convoy consisting of a number of merchantmen and one carrier in BE8515, course north.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Four submarines were escorted in, while one submarine was escorted out.

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Channel Coast:

Enemy objectives were located northwest of Boulogne between 2032 and 2130; they were shelled by our batteries without any noticeable effect.

The 8th PT Boat Flotilla consisting of nine boats carried out exercises west of the Hook of Holland from 1800.

Group West reported its intention to lay minefields N 13 and N 14 in Seine Bay, in addition to the minefield L 5, 6, 7, and N 8, which has already been approved; for this purpose they have requested the release of 300 available UMB mines.

The Naval Staff has agreed to this plan. Group West has been granted permission to use the UMB's without time setting; however, at least 100 UMB's are to be retained for offensive and tactical barrages which Commander, PT Boats may require, as it will be impossible to replace these mines in the near future.

Group West has informed the Naval Staff of the instructions to Commanding Admiral, Defenses West for the laying out of flanking minefields in the Seine Bay, The KONDOR, FALKE, MOEVE and GREIF under command of the Commander 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla have been made available as minecarriers of the Group.

The minefields N 8 will be laid while proceeding from Cherbourg to Le Havre. The minefields L 5 and 6 will be laid from Le Havre; because of the lack of craft each minefield is to be laid in tow parts, if possible within six days.

The minefields N 13 and 14 will be laid likewise from Le Havre; the minefield L 7 will be laid on the return to Cherbourg.

III. North Sea; Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea.

At 0055 the convoy Yuiden - Hook was attacked by four British PT boats off Nordwijk. The attack was repulsed in good time. Two of the attacking craft were set on fire. No losses on our side. During a second attack at 0156 a towing barge was hit by a torpedo.

Four ELM/J were cleared in the area of the West Frisian Islands, while three further ELM/J were cleared north of Borkum.

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2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Thirty eight planes were located operating over the North Sea, probably in the region of the coast of south Norway and in the sea area of the Shetland and Faeroe Islands.

On 9 Dec. sounds of engines, probably PT boats or submarines were located off Petsamo Fjord between 0005 and 0120. The same day six planes entered the Vardoe area while two further planes entered the Petsamo area. Likewise on 9 Dec. an agent reported the sighting of three submarines on the east coast of the isle of Store Saerjoe and of a further submarine 5 miles east of Ryvingen Lighthouse, the latter on course east-southeast, between 1700 and 1800. The Naval Command, Norway doubts the absolute reliability of this report. On 10 Dec. at 1250 13 twin-engined monoplanes were reported over the area west of the North Fjord outlet on course south.

Own Situation:

Fifty one ships were escorted north, and 30 ships south. Twenty ships remained in harbor as a result of escort shortage.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation.

Patrol boats observed in the sea channel until now seem to have been withdrawn. A layer of ice was observed over the whole of Kronstadt Bay. According to air reconnaissance six motor boats and one PT boat were lying in Lavansaari. Two guard boats were in position east of Seiskari.

2. Own Situation:

Naval Command, East has again drawn attention to the small fuel supplies in the Danish area and requests that some action be taken, especially as it effects the blockade-runners.

One mine was cleared south of Anholt. The LODY left Kristiansand South at 1050, course south.

Otherwise no special events to report from the whole Baltic Sea area.

V. Merchant Shipping.

I. Intelligence Division, Foreign Armies, Naval Staff reports on shipping between the United States and the Persian Gulf during the months of August, September and October 1943. For copy of the report I/Skl 42150/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI: During the time covered by the report a heavy increase of 65% in enemy supplies from the United States to the Persian Gulf in comparison with the previous months must be recorded. The percentage of supplies to Russia amounts to 72% of the total shipments, in October even 84%. From August to October there was a monthly average of 29 ships totalling 189,000 BRT as against 17 ships during the period from April to June. The flag of the United States predominates. The supply traffic from Great Britain to the Persian Gulf is considered unchanged, averaging 6 ships with altogether 40,000 BRT. Now traffic to the Persian Gulf is also routed through the Mediterranean. Some of the ships return by way of India and the Cape. Time needed for the round trip out and home through the Mediterranean 4-5 months, as against up to 7½ months out and home by way of the Cape. Also the times for discharging have been reduced from 4 to 3 weeks. The total amount of the goods shipped from the United States averages 200,000 tons monthly.

Thus the supply traffic to Russia by this route is very considerable.

The details in the report by the Intelligence Division, Foreign Armies are also worth reading.

II. The Reich Commissar for Shipping reports that for the time being ore from Spain is only being shipped from Valencia and Sagunto. The Reich Commissar for Shipping asks whether ships could occasionally call at Cartagena so that manganese ore could be shipped from there without endangering their security. The Operations Division, Naval Staff at first informed the Reich Commissar for Shipping that the only protection for the ships engaged in the shipment of ore from eastern Spain apart from their own armament consists in their taking advantage of Spanish territorial waters, though it is even doubtful whether they will be respected by the enemy. According to the view of the Naval Staff the already existing risk will not be increased much by an occasional call at Cartagena.

Group West has been informed, so that a thorough investigation of the possibilities and risks can be made.

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VI. Submarine Warfare.

Nothing to report.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the evening and during the night of 10 Dec. 48 bombers and 8 heavy fighters of the 3rd Air Force were detailed to attack Chelmsford. Owing to unfavorable weather conditions only 13 planes reached the main target, while 33 planes attacked emergency targets. Five planes broke off their task, and four planes failed to return.

By day only single enemy planes entered the area of Belgium, Holland and France. Southeast of Arnhem two ships were bombed and sunk and a further ship was damaged. Two enemy planes crashed over Holland.

2. German Reich Territory:

During daylight single planes dropped bombs in the Rhineland. At Cleve a ship laden with 700 tons of briquettes was sunk; a ship laden with 600 tons of iron ore was damaged. In the night several strong formations entered the Rhenish-Westfalian industrial area, where bombs were dropped on various localities.

3. Mediterranean area:

Rough evaluation of photographic reconnaissance of Port Said revealed: 1 Greek cruiser, 3 destroyers, 5 small warships, 4 probable escort vessels, 3 submarines, 7 LCT's 250, 3 probable transports, 34 freighters (about 170,000 BRT), 7 tankers (about 50,000 BRT) and 1 hospital ship.

Nine enemy planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery over the frontal zone in Italy.

No reports have been received on enemy air activity in Italy.

At about 1935 ship targets in the Gulf of Genoa were strafed by machine guns. One plane was shot down.

From the area of Air Force Command Southeast no reports have come in.

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VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area of Naval Group Command West:

Enemy Situation:

In the morning a DIDO class cruiser and a destroyer coming from the Mediterranean put into Gibraltar. On 9 Dec. a convoy consisting of 40 ships escorted by 9 destroyers and probably one cruiser passed Gibraltar eastward bound, while on 8 Dec. at 0155 a convoy consisting of 40 freighters and 3 tankers protected by 14 escort vessels passed the Straits in a westerly direction.

Own Situation:

Five convoys totalling 23,305 BRT were escorted off the south coast of France.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Apart from five escort vessels sailing southeast of Cagliari our air reconnaissance did not report any sightings.

A large merchantman was sighted 32 miles northeast of Termoli, course 300 degrees. On the evening of 9 Dec. light naval forces shelled the coast northwest of Pesaro.

Own Situation:

The minelaying task "Hummerschwanz" and "Zander" were carried out by the torpedo boats TA "23", TA "24" and the minelayer DWARSLAEUFER according to plan. Thus the area on both sides of the island of Giglio is protected.

Six PT boats left to carry out the minelaying task "Kuerassier". Fresh damage was caused in the town and harbor of Civitavecchia by an enemy air raid during the night of 9 Dec. There were no casualties.

Three two-man assault boats belonging to the 10th Italian PT Boat Flotilla carried out exercises off La Spezia during the night of 11 Dec.

The transfer of motor minesweepers to the Adriatic by land is proceeding as planned and is being accelerated. The first boat has begun its tow down the Po river.

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With regard to the report made by the Commanding Admiral, German Naval Command, Italy (see War Diary 7 Dec., VII, 2) Operations Division, Naval Staff refers to the directives of 28 Oct. and 12 Nov. (compare War Diaries on these days). According to this, without question the most important task in the Adriatic is the supply of all branches of the Armed Forces along the Dalmatian coast. An essential condition for this is the fortification of the islands off the Dalmatian coast and the establishment of a coastal defense. Therefore all tasks planned on the Italian coast of the Adriatic must take second place. After a report to the Fuehrer the latter approved of the measures introduced. For copy of the instructions as per I/Skl I op. 41317/43 most secret, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

According to a report from an escaped Croatian officer the supply cutter was captured by partisans on 2 Dec. on its way from Zara to Sibenik. On 8 Dec. an auxiliary sailing vessel belonging to the Croatian Navy was captured by two partisan motor boats while sailing from Split to Metkovic.

The hospital ship GRADISCA reported a floating mine 65 miles west-southwest of Split. The ship announced that she is likely to arrive at Venice on the morning of 11 Dec.

The steamer CAGLIARI (2,538 BRT) ran aground on 9 Dec. on her way from Rovigno to Venice.

b. Aegean Sea:

On 9 Dec. at 1810 the steamer SONJA (2,719 BRT) was sunk by an enemy submarine off Kythnos when sailing from Piraeus to the Dardanelles. Forty one survivors were rescued. Unescorted traffic of small ships to Lemnos has been prohibited because of the danger of submarines.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

At 2300 on 9 Dec. after being subjected to a heavy surprise attack from enemy batteries, naval landing craft

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operating in the Straits of Kerch fought an action with enemy landing craft which were trying to reach the bridge-head. In the course of the fighting altogether nine enemy craft were destroyed by naval landing craft and coastal batteries, according to observations from the land. A naval landing craft was damaged and suffered casualties. Motor minesweepers operating in the south part of the Straits of Kerch did not come in contact with the enemy.

During the night of 10 Dec. four naval landing craft and three motor minesweepers will patrol the Straits of Kerch. at 2000 naval landing craft reported artillery fire by coastal batteries in the vicinity of Pavlovskaya.

On the afternoon of 10 Dec. six PT boats left Ivanbaba for operations against the Caucasus coast; they were, however, forced to return on account of unfavorable weather conditions. Otherwise no special events were reported.

As regards the Army Situation, the Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army Group A reports that the elevation 91.4 south of Kerch, near the Mithridat mountain, has been taken.

IX. Situation East Asia.

I. Burma Front:

On 5 Dec. Japanese planes carried out a heavy attack on Calcutta.

2. Marshall Islands:

According to a report from the U. S. Navy Department a special "carrier task force" was ordered into action in the area of the Marshall Islands.

According to a further report from the U. S. Navy Department American planes sank six enemy ships, including two light cruisers, while 72 enemy planes were shot down. An American carrier was damaged. (Additional note: this would be the second of the seven carriers sunk according to Japanese reports.)

3. New Guinea:

Enemy warships recently appeared for the first time

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off the north coast of New Guinea; they shelled the Japanese bases there. According to Japanese reports enemy warships are also said to be operating in the Harafura Sea between Timor and New Guinea. In the area of Finchhaven a Japanese division started an offensive against the Australian troops stationed in that area.

According to Japanese estimates the enemy air forces stationed in east New Guinea total about 800 machines.

4. Solomon Islands:

About 750 craft of about 4-500 tons are being concentrated in the area of Tulagi(north of Guadalcanal). In addition to this there are 22 warships including aircraft carriers in that area. 750 smaller craft are likewise assembled north of Buna. From these facts the Japanese conclude that the enemy is making further preparations for landing operations in Bougainville.

Items of Political Importance.

According to a telegram from the Turkish Foreign Minister to his Ambassador in Moscow, Turkey is determined to reject any Allied pressure if London is not satisfied with the answer which has been given. Also in the presence of representatives of the Axis press, the Foreign Minister repeated the declaration that Turkish foreign policy would remain unchanged.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports on the striling accumulation of news dealing with an inner crisis which it is alleged has broken out in Bulgaria. No news of this kind have been received in this quarter direct from Sofia.

II. In the course of a conference with the Chief of Staff, Group North/Fleet on 10 Dec. the question of command in case of emergency in accordance with Fuehrer Directive 51 was again discussed. Group North/Fleet objects to the restricting order of the Operations Division, Naval Staff, regarding the command in the eastern Baltic (see War Diary 2 Dec. Conference on the Situation with Chief of Naval Staff, VII, a.). After a thorough discussion it was acknowledged that the Group's attitude was justified; however, any further demand for a premature transfer of authrotiy was rejected. The matter will first of all be reported to the Chief, of Naval Staff, providing there is opportunity after approval by Commander of the Naval High Command, East.

III. Army Situation:

The concentration of 13 armored corps in the Kievearea with the spearhead directed against Odessa points to the possibility of an enemy attempt to launch a large-scale operation. Our measures have taken this danger into account as far as the available forces allow. The prospect of taking operational initiative from the Nikopol bridgehead southwards has therefore vanished almost completeld.

As a result of the strong enemy concentration of forces our offensive operation in the area north Zhitomir has gradually turned to the defensive.

Special Items.

The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff issued the following order to Group South, Operations Division:

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Disregarding the fact that the order of the High Command, Armed Forces to hold the Crimea is still in force, Naval Group, South must nevertheless make a precautionary survey of what the consequences of an eventual evacuation of the Crimea would be with regard to the occupation of Rumnian territory by naval units and offices. Result is to be reported to the Armed Forces High Command and Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

This investigation is to be carried out by the staff of Naval Group, South within as restricted a circle as possible and in strictest secrecy. No other authorities are to be informed.

Situation 11 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Chief of the Air Force, Operations Staff, Navy received the following instructions:

During the period from 20 to 30 December 1943 the blockade-runners OSORNO and ALSTERUFER are expected to enter the Bay of Biscay. Orders for escort, reconnaissance and the protection of these ships have been issued to Naval Group West. Orders affecting Air Force Command, Atlantic in this connection will be issued by Group West. By order of the Commander in Chief, Navy no further demands will be made on the Air Force Commander, Atlantic by the submarine arm as from 15 Dec.

It is requested that the decisive importance of Air Force co-operation in this operation be impressed on the Chief of the Air Force, Operations Staff and that the Commander, Atlantic has all available personnel and material placed at his disposal for the execution of this task (Accelerated completion of the two BV 222 C's still in the Baltic area; accelerated return to operational readiness of the 1st Div., Bomber Wing 40, with He 177's.)

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II. Situation West Area:

I. Enemy Situation:

Lively reconnaissance as far as 12 degrees W by 53 planes of the 19th Group.

One British vessel was located.

 at 0905 in AL 8480
and at 1816 in BE 3530

and a U. S. vessel at 0224 in BF 1590. At 1807 the U. S. Unit was ordered to make for the "Sugfolk" in CA 2935 at maximum speed. "Assistance urgently requested".

Radio monitoring observed what were presumably invasion exercises in the Portsmouth area.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The patrol boat "622" sank off Rochefort as a result of striking a mine. Three submarines were escorted in.

To an inquiry regarding the operational readiness of long-range reconnaissance planes and long-range bombers of Air Commander, Atlantic, Group West replies as follows: Of the 15 FW 200's available: ten; of the 6 Ju 290's: three; of the 2 BV 222's: none; of the 16 He 177's: twelve ready for operations on 9 Dec. Thus of the actual strength of 49 planes, 25 planes are operational.

Channel Coast:

Three minss were cleared southwest of Jersey. Otherwise no special events were reported.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring an air attack was carried out on a formation of minesweepers, probably in the Thames area, at 1053. Later the attackers were reported to be British planes.

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Own Situation:

The convoy "1193" Hook - Elbe was completed. Altogether four ELM/J were cleared in the area of Norderney and Borkum.

Nine survivors of a crashed British bomber were rescued by the artillery naval landing craft "45" and "49" on their way from Borkum to Den Helder.

Between 1058 and 1335 strong enemy bomber formations entered the coastal area by way of Holland and the Heligoland Bight. Between 1215 and 1315 about 300 planes carried out an air raid on Emden, dropping five carpets of bombs on the town and two on the suburbs.

The battery at Larrelt and the searchlight at Marxhausen were put out of action by bombs. Eight high-explosives were dropped on the airfield at Langeoog. Here one plane was shot down by machine-guns; the naval anti-aircraft artillery in Emden reported the destruction of five planes.

For details see Teletypes 1740, 1845, and 1924.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Up to 15 planes were detected operating over the central and northern North Sea and in the area of the Shetlands - Faeroes. A vessel of the 30th PT Boat Flotilla was in the Skagerrak area at 1224. At 0110 a midget-submarine was sighted in Bergen harbor by a patrol boat belonging to the Port Commander; the boat was proceeding half submerged at a speed of about 5 knots, then it submerged and shortly afterwards its conning tower appeared on the surface once again.

On 10 and 11 Dec. single planes were reported over the Kirkenes, Stavanger and Bergen areas; on the evening of 10 Dec. 8-12 planes were observed in the area between Egersund and Lister.

Own Situation:

Until now the exhaustive search for the midget-submarine in Bergen harbor has been without result.

Thirty eight ships were escorted north and 47 south.

Nineteen ships remained in port on account of shortage of escorts.

Group North/Fleet reported that for the time being the only way of protecting Alta Fjord against midget-submarines consists in laying out deep staircase minefields in the barrage gap of Kaa Fjord, combined with net barrages, since the laying of acoustic warning devices as well as of Biks and ground mines is out of the question.

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The Group requests that the Naval Command, Norway make suitable mining material for the closing of the barrage gap available immediately.

The Naval Staff has therefore asked the Naval Command, Norway to report the number and type of mines required for the closing of the barrage gap. There are considerable supplies of UMA immediately available. A favorable sea-bed is necessary for effective mining.

IV. Skaggerak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to an agent's report from Goeteborg the DICTO and the LIONEL were armed. Both ships are lying north of Lysekil.

2. Own Situation:

At 1145 enemy planes carried out a low-level attack on the Army Engineer School at Koskolovo. There were casualties among the personnel and damage by fire. There are no special events to report from the whole Baltic Sea area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

In the north Atlantic Groups "Coronel" 1 and 2 were transferred 80 miles to the eastward.

Otherwise nothing to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

At noon about 300 Fortresses penetrated the Emden area in several waves; 200 of these Fortresses approached the Emden area by way of Spiekeroog - Wilhelmshaven without fighter escort, while the remaining 100 Fortresses escorted by 100 fighters approached by way of Texel. At the same time two covering formations were over North Holland. This, the heaviest attack ever carried out on Emden resulted in remarkable damage. There was particularly heavy devastation in the area of the western railway station. In the harbor several craft sank. Only a little cable damage was caused in the Government dockyards. The casualties were slight.

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Our fighter defense totalled altogether 331 planes which shot down 21 planes for certain and probably destroyed five more. Nineteen of our planes are missing.

During the night of 11 Dec. light forces penetrated the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial area. Some bombs were dropped on Duisburg.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Our reconnaissance detected 20 large merchantmen with escort, northbound, 200 miles northwest of Benghazi. Nineteen Ju 88's sent out to attack did not detect the formation, despite the use of Hohentwiel instruments.

Detailed evaluation of the reconnaissance of Port Said on 10 Dec. showed that there were 21 large landing craft as well as 150 small landing craft, 2 infantry landing craft totalling 23,000 BRT, 39 freighters totalling 198,500 BRT and 7 tankers totalling 50,000 BRT in harbor.

About 300 planes were operating in the front area, two of which were shot down. Attacks were directed against Ostia as well as our own installations at Nettuno, south of Rome.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast eight reconnaissance planes were detected over the Aegean Sea during the day, while during the night nine planes were detected over Suda Bay, probably engaged in minelaying.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report:

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0700 an eastbound convoy consisting of 60 craft as well as of three tankers, and eight destroyers or corvettes was reported in the Straits of Gibraltar. At 1730 on 10 Dec. an eastbound convoy was in CH 8435 (northeast of Arzeu.). At 1330 on 10 Dec. the Italian cruiser DUCA D'AOSTA put into Gibraltar from the Mediterranean and left again at 1550 bound for the Atlantic. On 10 Dec. at 1515 21 tank landing craft left Gibraltar for the Atlantic, while at 1745 23 tank landing craft left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean.

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Own Situation:

At 0500 an enemy submarine attacked one of our convoys south of Cannes without success.

Otherwise nothing to report.

2. Area German Naval Command, Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the course of the enemy air attack on Civitavecchia on 10 Dec. one naval landing craft became a total loss. A further naval landing craft sank in St. Stefano on 9 Dec.

During the night of 10 Dec. six PT boats carried out the minelaying task "Kuerassier" in Olbia Bay according to plan.

Finally an enemy radio station was fired on with good effect.

On 9 Dec. at 1317 submarine U "956" sank one freighter of 7,600 BRT out of a southwest-bound convoy consisting of 17 steamers in OK 7445.

On 11 Dec. at 1300 submarine U "223" sank a destroyer out of an eastbound convoy with a Zaunkoenig torpedo in CH 8518.

"Wren"

During the night of 10 Dec. our escort vessels shot down an enemy plane east of Savona.

At the request of Operations Division, Naval Staff, the German Naval Command, Italy reports that the breakthrough of fast singly-proceeding ships through the Straits of Sicily seems to promise success, as, for one thing, the enemy is also running fast single traffic and secondly, the enemy patrol will not reckon with the presence of our steamers in the passage area. Suggested course: about 06 degrees, then 38 degrees N, through the Straits of Sicily on the course of the Swedish or Italian repatriation ships by way of 16 degrees E, 35 degrees North, either Patras or Kytheria passage. In default of air reconnaissance no data on enemy convoy routing is available. The data on courses of the Swedish ships and the repatriation ships has been destroyed here. It is presumed that Commander, Submarines, Mediterranean and Commanding Admiral, Submarines, are still in possession of this data. Essential conditions for success:

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- a. Completely unobtrusive preparation, e.g. no special air reconnaissance.
- b. Engines in perfect running order.
- c. Able, hand-picked crews.
- d. An experienced commander of an auxiliary cruiser or an auxiliary ship, or captain of a blockade-runner.

If the transfer of such great importance as to justify the employment of such valuable personnel, I suggest that other offensive tasks are executed at the same time, e. g. minelaying.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

During the night of 9 Dec. two enemy destroyers and several PT boats shelled Benedetto from the sea.

In the afternoon of 10 Dec. the torpedo boats TA "21" and TA :4" put in to Trieste. All harbors defense boats ready for operations left Fiume and Pola for execution of the island operation.

Four auxiliary minesweepers are scheduled to follow on 12 Dec.

The Operations Headquarters of Admiral Adriatic remains in Belgrade until 19 Dec., then the staff will move to Abazzia.

No reports concerning the arrival of the hospital ship GRADISCA in Venice has yet been received.

b. Aegean Sea:

At 1145 an auxiliary sailing vessel struck a mine off Salamis. On 8 Dec. an enemy plane was set on fire by a naval landing craft off the north coast of Amorgos.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The naval landing craft operating in the petrol line during the night of 10 Dec. were subjected to a very heavy fire from enemy artillery and "Stalin-organs". In addition six naval landing craft were bombed by enemy planes.

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The boats suffered no damage. At about midnight an enemy landing formation consisting of 20 landing craft and four motor gunboats were accurately shelled by our coastal batteries, forcing them to retreat before the naval landing craft could participate in the fight.

Altogether our coastal defense sank eight small and four large boats.

Motor minesweepers operating in the south part of the Straits of Kerch and minesweepers operating in the area of Cape Idocopas and Cape Utrisch did not come into contact with the enemy.

During the night of 11 Dec. the Straits of Kerch will be patrolled by three mineclearance vessels in the southern area.

In the area of Cape Tarchankutsk two submarine-chasers (war transports) carried out a submarine hunt. One naval landing craft was heavily damaged in the course of an enemy air attack on Kamysh Burun. Four damaged naval landing craft transferred from Kamysh Burun to Feodosia.

Otherwise nothing to report.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The following is a report from the Naval Attache, Tokoyo and Air Attache, Tokoyo to the Armed Forces High Command, Foreign Countries, Naval Staff, High Command of the Air Force and High Command, Army:

1. 6th Bougainville battle in the afternoon of 3 Dec. southwest of Mono Island, eight transports, course 300 degrees, speed 18 knots, later four auxiliary mine carriers. Ten cruisers and destroyers were sighted southwest of Mono, course 310 degrees, speed 18 knots. The latter formation was attacked by 32 Japanese carrier-borne dive bombers, carrier-borne torpedo planes and land-based torpedo planes from Rabaul between 1810 and 1840. Three auxiliary carriers and two cruisers were sunk. Ten of our planes are missing

2. Between dawn and 1000 hours on 5 Dec. the Marshall Islands, Wotje and Maloelap were attacked by enemy carrier-borne planes from the northeast. The airfields on both islands and some land-based planes and flying boats were destroyed. An enemy formation consisting of two carriers (one carrier, one converted cruiser), three cruisers and seven destroyers, speed 25 knots was detected at 0800. After dusk that evening, six Japanese carrier-borne torpedo planes and nine or ten twin-engined torpedo planes took off from other airfields on the Marshall Islands in three waves for a counter-attack 200 miles northeast of the Marshalls. One converted carrier and one cruiser were sunk.

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In addition to this two carriers received at least three torpedo hits and a further cruiser at least two hits. Our losses: all six carrier-borne planes which took part in the first wave.

3. The Japanese Naval Staff has asserted the reliability of their success reports stressing the fact that Japanese reports must not lose their past authenticity. It is possible that pilots may confuse ships' types during the night attacks. The pilots are divided into three classes:

- a. for night flying
- b. for moonlight attacks,
- c. for day attacks with bombs only under command of squadron commanders.

All attacks were carried out by class a). The Naval Staff emphasizes that the successes are likely to be greater than reported, as they were carefully investigated. The equipment of the American auxiliary carriers is only very simple, as they were originally intended for convoy escort against submarines now they are appearing in the Pacific. Maximum speed 18 knots.

4. Gilbert Islands:

There is no communication with Tarawa and Makin, the islands have evidently been occupied by the enemy. The islands are within range of Japanese Air attacks from the Marshall Islands. There were 2,400 naval infantrymen under the command of a Rear-Admiral on Tarawa. It is presumed that enemy losses in personnel will be correspondingly high.

There were 300 to 400 naval infantrymen on Makin. Both islands are quite level, - natural landing fields.

5. The Japanese Naval Staff is expecting imminent attacks and the occupation of the Ocean Islands and Nauru.

Items of Political Importance.

Benes arrived in Moscow on 11 Dec. in order to discuss and conclude with Russia a treaty for a future Czechoslovakia.

This news is worth mentioning because Benes had the same intention some months ago, but could not realize it on account of the strict interdiction of his hosts. The fact that he made this journey after all allows us to draw interesting conclusions from the Moscow Conference. Whether this conference paved the way to Moscow for Benes, or whether Stalin intended the treaty with Benes as an open rebellion against their political obligations remains to be seen.

According to Reuter, Washington officially announced that until now the losses of the U. S. forces since Pearl Harbor amount to 129,422 men, including about 28,000 killed, 40,000 wounded, 33,000 missing and 28,500 prisoners.

The Chief of the Brazilian General Staff, General Monteiro has announced his resignation.

The U. S. Secretary of State, Hull, is expected to arrive in Madrid shortly.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff raises the question of whether interruption of the present good co-operation between submarines and the Air Force in the Atlantic is justifiable in order to send out very strong submarine forces against PQ convoy, should this prove necessary.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff considers that the appearance of only one PQ convoy would not suffice to justify the interruption of combined operations in the Atlantic. This could only be justified when actual measures for the establishment of a second front and signs of more frequent traffic between Great Britain and Murmansk became apparent.

The Chief of the Naval Staff supports this view.

II. The Deputy Chief, Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that there is no confirmation of the alarming news circulating about Bulgaria.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.III. Army Situation:

The Officer for Army Liaison and Land Warfare Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff returned from the Army General Staff where he had to clear up the discrepancy in

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statements of the various offices regarding supplies to the Crimea etc.

The defensive situation in the East remains almost unchanged; isolated counter attacks by our troops were successful.

New concentrations of partisans were observed in the zara area where mopping up operation have just been completed.

IV. Report of Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff.

a. According to information received from the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) the Fuehrer is still determined to hold the Crimea. The Fuehrer expects that the bringing up of further submarines to the Black Sea will give us naval supremacy in that area within a few months.

At the first opportunity the Chief of the Naval Staff will make it clear to the Fuehrer, by submitting the deadlines for the completion of the new submarines, that we are far from achieving the results he imagines.

b. Operations Division, Fleet Operations Section, Naval Staff was sent to Sofia in order to discuss all pending questions on the spot.

c. From the news of the last few days it appears that there are now certain concentrations of shipping in the eastern Mediterranean. Under certain circumstances one may draw the conclusion that this assembly of ships may be in preparation for an operation in the Straits as suggested in the review of the situation from Tokoyo (see War Diary 10 Dec.).

d. Request made by the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command, Norway regarding the amalgamation of the supreme operations staffs in Norway, and in place an Armed Forces, Operations Staff under the command of a naval officer.

If this idea was carried into effect it would be greatly to the disadvantage of the Navy. Increased requirements in personnel, dependence of the command on the command of the Armed Forces and the consequent break with the Naval Staff and High Command, Navy speak against Admiral Ciliak's proposal.

The Chief, Naval Staff is of the same opinion and also points out that the naval officer is not trained for the tasks he would be required to handle. The command of land troops would become an unbearable burden. The Chief, Naval Staff warns against overestimating the possibilities of naval warfare. What is being achieved in the Black Sea against the Russian enemy would be far less effective against the British. An offensive against British units with naval landing craft is scarcely worth considering.

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V. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reports that the command post Koralle can be taken over by Submarine Division, Naval Staff as from 12 Dec., although some of the final work will not be completed in time. There is considerably greater security there than at the office on Steinplatz.

The Chief, Naval Staff intends to order the transfer unless Rear Admiral Godt can produce cogent reasons for a postponement.

The Chief, Naval Staff intends to celebrate Christmas with the unit or in his office which has had a particular bad time. Unfortunately the plan to spend Christmas aboard the TIRPITZ this year is not possible because of the ban on flights issued by the Fuehrer.

Special Items.

I. On 12 Dec. the Japanese Liaison Officer attached to the Naval Staff submitted material for a review on enemy plans. For copy see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV. According to this the Japanese draw the following conclusions:

1. Anglo-American shipping will not suffice for simultaneous large-scale operations in Europe and Asia.

2. As regards shipping space it would be easier to carry out a large-scale landing in Europe than in Asia.

3. Therefore the spring of 1944 will probably see large-scale landings in Europe, and naval and air operations in East Asia. For the latter American losses will be made up by supplementing units of the British Fleet.

II. The Naval Staff judges that the political discussions in Moscow, Teheran and Cairo will have the following effects on the military situation:

"I. For the time being Great Britain is bound in South Italy where the greater part of the Army and Air Forces are required for the capture of at least the Rome area. Further operations in the Mediterranean area are dependent on the progress of the fighting in Italy. It is presumed that preparations for a landing in the Balkans or in southern France are being continued. As far as can be seen Turkey has managed to evade Allied pressure to enter the war so far.

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In southern England the preparations for a landing in force continue. The commencement of a landing operation with the main thrust directed against northern France-Belgium - Holland is possible at any time and will probably take place in the spring of 1944.

2. U. S. plans for intensified action against Japan, retaining Chungking-China in active partnership have been revived. Despite the considerable losses of the British in the Southwest Pacific, Anglo-American pressure on Japan will be increased on account of American home policy, and will aggravate the Japanese situation because of the great difficulties of supply and the high consumption of forces."

Highest naval operational headquarters will be informed to this effect. For corresponding teletype I/Skl I b 41727/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. a.

III. According to a report confirmed by the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Construction Division on 9 Dec. and by the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) the Fuehrer desires that armed naval landing craft be called naval landing craft (artillery): this should make it easier to distinguish between these and unarmed naval landing craft, i. e. merchant vessels.

It has not been discovered how this desire of the Fuehrer became known to the Naval Construction Division.

IV. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) transmitted for information a copy of a review of the American Armed Forces by General von Boetticher dated 1 Dec. 1943. Copy without registration number in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XVI.

V. On the basis of a discussion with the Chief of Staff, Group North/Fleet on 10 Dec. the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has been instructed to assign the merchant PT boat captured in the Skagerrak, and the captured Norwegian PT Boat to the 30th PT Boat Flotilla, Group North/Fleet.

VI. In the new review of the supply situation in the Crimea transmitted by the Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army General Staff (see War Diary 10 Dec.) through the Quartermaster General, General Staff an increase of the daily transport capacity to the Crimea from 1500 to 2500 tons is requested. The investigation, ordered by the Chief, Naval Staff as to whether these demands can be satisfied, has been completed. For result see I/Skl I op. 3605/43 Gkdos. Chfs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a. The following is a summary of the report:

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Theoretically the transport space available in the Black Sea allows a daily transport capacity of 1,500 tons. To increase this to 2,500 tons is impossible; rather in a decrease in capacity to be expected as a consequence of the aggravated situation owing to icing and bad weather conditions.

Summing up the question of escort forces, it continues:

Owing to the weakness of our escort forces it is improbable that the theoretical transport capacity of 1,500 tons can be maintained for long. Losses due enemy action cannot be avoided. It is difficult to say in advance how quickly the transport capacity will decrease. However, a drop to 1,200 - 1,300 tons daily can well be reckoned with during the winter months.

Admiral Black Sea's view that supply of the Crimea by sea cannot be guaranteed in the long run is supported. Group South has been asked to express its opinion on this subject.

The Army General Staff is to be informed that the present transport capacity cannot be increased, on the contrary, that a gradual decrease must be reckoned with. Provided that the present strategic situation is maintained a transport capacity of about 1,500 - 1,200 tons daily can be reckoned with for the next three months.

The naval forces in the Black Sea are to be engaged primarily in the protection of supplies to the Crimea. Emphasizing the transport situation, the General Staff is to be asked whether naval operations in the Straits of Kerch could be discontinued. Constant air support for the protection of supplies is essential.

Situation 12 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Sixty seven planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay.

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One vessel was located at 1911 in AL 9590, at 1927 in SL 5820, at 2010 in AL 7493 and at 2051 in BA 2280.

At 1445 radio monitoring service intercepted a report on the towing in of a wreck from BF 2513 by a Falmouth minesweeper.

Unitl now there are no reports on the reconnaissance carried out by a BV 222 and two Ju 290's west of Ireland and a FW 200 in the Western Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Three steamers laden with ore, totalling about 8,500 BRT were escorted from Bilbao to southern France.

Three submarines were escorted in and one out.

Channel Coast:

Owing to bright moonlight there was no escort, guard and minesweeping service during the night. One craft was escorted in the Channel Islands area.

Special Items:

The minelaying offensive against the British coast scheduled to take place by the end of September was not carried out on anything like the scale intended by the Naval Staff. Instead of 4-5-operations of 100 - 120 mines each for every new moon period only one operation was started in the penultimate period and none during the last period. ?Group West was informed on 8 Dec. that the basic instructions with regard to task and operations area issued by the Operations Division, Naval Staff remained in force for PT boats, in spite of the fact that air force minelaying operations were broken off.

On 11 Dec. Group West commented on this order: It reports that during the last three new moon periods altogether four minelaying operations by PT boats took place, that the low total number is due to unfavorable weather conditions. It also reports that in future the execution of the minelaying offensive will have to be revised, as the Air Force has dropped out of minelaying operations altogether, thereby changing the essential operating conditions completely; in addition, the effectiveness of the firing unit MA2 has not proved greater than that of the other kinds of mines used up to the present, a fact which has been confirmed by prisoners' statements. The AA I has not been used until now, as the

special security measure ordered by the Naval Staff has not yet been completed by the Minelaying Experimental Command.

The Group thus no longer considers minelaying as the main task of PT boats, but varied operations on the basis of experiences made by of Commander PT Boats, and requests permission to carry out minelaying operations off the British coast in line with the usual operational intentions of Commander PT Boats. In reply to this the Naval Staff sent the following instructions to Group West:

"I. According to the information received here only three major offensive operations were carried out by Commander PT Boats. (24.9., 27.10., 4.11.43). The operation east of the Isle of Wight on 26 Nov. can only be considered as a diversionary one.

According to the War Diary of Commander PT Boats which has arrived meanwhile, Commander PT Boats took the responsibility of deciding as early as the 15 Oct. after the second minelaying operation that the minelaying offensive had to be broken off. The order I/Skl I E 2056/43 Gkdos. Chfs. was therefore disregarded or evaded by the Commander PT Boats, an action which is strongly disapproved.

2. The scanty minelaying operations so far executed do not yet justify the view in that quarter that PT boats should shift the focus of their operations from the minelaying offensive to mixed torpedo and minelaying operations.

a. In the assigned area between Humber and Cromer where PT boat minelaying operations were to be concentrated in accordance with orders from Naval Staff, the shallow water and sandbanks permit only very restricted torpedo operations. Consequently even if the enemy withdrew inshore the possibilities of torpedo attacks by the PT boats would not be affected by the minelaying operations. The possibilities of evading under cover of the coast are very limited in this area, thus the boats can withdraw comparatively little air cover. It is not true that air force dropped out of minelaying operations altogether, sufficient air forces can be made available occasionally in case of worthwhile operations with a limited target area, as for instance along the coast line Blackeney - Cromer. When the minelaying offensive was broken off by Commander PT Boats, the mining of the area ordered by the Naval Staff had not taken place at all, and even the third operation covered this area very incompletely with only 14 UMB's and 40 LMB's.

b. In the opinion of this office evidence has not yet been produced to show that the effectiveness of the MA 2 is not greater than that of the firing unit employed hitherto. It is requested that statements of prisoners

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referring to this be submitted, as they have not been seen here. After the first operation the enemy was forced to use an alternate route for quite a time, as was confirmed by the radio monitoring service. From this it was also learned that the enemy at least encountered considerable difficulty when sweeping that area. It is difficult to say whether the small number of minesweeping successes are accidental or whether the enemy has discovered in principle a possible method of sweeping then. Certainly, after a nearly three months' lull in mine warfare the enemy has had time to arm himself against the new firing unit; this is a fundamental mistake when introducing a new firing unit.

c. Until now the AA I has not been used, as the advance contact was not yet built in. This is technical difficulty which has not yet been satisfactorily solved. Permission has been given to lay an experimental minefield without this additional contact, but with clockwork arming switch set to 12 hours and cement plugs.

3. A decision on the eventual limitation of the minelaying offensive by PT boats will follow as soon as the results of concentrated operations in the area ordered permit definite conclusions to be drawn concerning the prospects of success.

The Naval Staff expects the Commander PT Boats to give his attention to the basic instructions for minelaying, and start intensified operations as soon as weather conditions allow."

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The convoy "1195" Elbe -Hook departed at 1700 under strong escort. Five convoys totalling 22,543 BRT were carried out in Zealand waters.

Otherwise no special events to report.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Twenty planes were detected operating over the North Sea.

In the course of the day two planes were reported over Kristiansand - Lister and one plane over Bergen and one over Gossen.

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Own Situation:

The search for midget-submarines in the harbor of Bergen continued without success.

Fifty three ships were escorted north and 36 ships south. Sixteen ships were delayed going to lack of escort vessels.

At 2055 the patrol boat "6106" sank east of Vadsoe after an explosion, probably as the result of a torpedo hit.

Naval Command, Norway asks that Admiral Polar Coast's request for permission to rig up a net-cage for the floating dock in Bogen Bay be approved. In any case it could not be done until the end of February on account of the work in progress in Alta Fjord and for Commander, Submarines in Hammerfest and Narvik. Further action will be taken by Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

It is alleged that a fishing boat, aboard which there were three persons with demolition charges and propaganda leaflets, has been detained in Roedvik on Sjaelland.

The Swedish tanker STOLVIK which had left Pillau without permission was forced to return to the harbor by a motor minesweeper.

In the area of Admiral, Baltic Countries two teams of the Naval Artillery Detachment 531 were detailed to pursue partisans north of Welkino. Two villages were destroyed. Our forces did not come into contact with the enemy.

Otherwise escort and mineclearance service was carried out as planned and without any incidents in the whole Baltic area.

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V. Submarine Warfare.

I. Enemy Situation:

The British Admiralty and the Air Ministry published a detailed report on an allegedly successful defensive action against a strong German Submarine Flotilla in the North Atlantic. According to this altogether five of our submarines were destroyed and three damaged, while more than 99% of the escorted ships reached their destination unharmed. The British naval forces suffered neither damage nor losses, three planes of the Coastal Command were damaged during the fight, two further planes were forced to land at sea. For evaluation of the report according to the Chi-news No. 1386 see War Diary, Part C, Vol.IV.

2. Own Situation:

In the South Atlantic submarine U "510" reported on 9 Dec. a steamer in FP 5524 northbound, at high speed. The submarine was detected by enemy air reconnaissance on 10 Dec.; it sighted destroyers for two days and on 13 Dec. a searching cruiser of the CONCORD class with planes. There was no opportunity to attack.

In the North Atlantic air reconnaissance for Group "Coronel" produced no results. A plane reported after landing that during a temporary failure of the search-gear at 1400 three ships were sighted in AL 3950 for a short time. As according to dead-reckoning the convoy ON was believed to be sailing in that area, Groups "Coronel I" and "Coronel II" was ordered to occupy the patrol line from AK 3696 through 6329 to AL 4773 as from 1900 on 13 Dec.

If a close reconnaissance with double the number of planes had been possible, there would probably have been a chance of picking up the convoy and reporting it in time. The Air Commander, Atlantic had all available forces operating. This case clearly demonstrates that the number of planes is inadequate. The failure of a single search-gear set resulted in a frustrated operation which had been prepared long beforehand and involved a great number of submarines. Renewed air reconnaissance in the area of "Coronel" is planned for 13 Dec. engaging all available forces, i. e. two ju 290's and one FW 200.

There are no special reports from the Indian Ocean.

VI. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

Six Ju 88's attacked eight Beaufighter planes 200 miles west-southwest of Brest. The concentrated attack dissolved into a number of individual air battles. Two enemy planes were shot down for certain, the destruction of a further plane is probable. Three of our planes are missing.

Only single enemy planes entered occupied western territory. One tug was damaged on the western Scheldt.

2. German Reich Territory:

During the night about 30 planes entered the Rhenish-Westfalian industrial area. In Essen 25 of 33 high-explosives fell on the Krupp plant. A Mosquito was shot down by three of our fighters.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our Air Force carried out reconnaissance flights.

About 300 enemy planes, including reconnaissance planes, fighter-bomber and bombers were operating in the Italian frontal area.

Three enemy planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery.

In the area of Air Force Command Southeast the enemy carried out reconnaissance in the Aegean by day and night. In the evening eight enemy planes caused slight damage in an attack on Cania (Crete).

4. Eastern Front.

There are no special reports from the Black Sea and the area of the 5th Air Force.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area of Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

At 1120 eleven freighters escorted by three corvettes, one destroyer and one auxiliary cruiser left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean. The battleship RENOWN entered the Mediterranean coming from the Atlantic.

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The following must therefore be in the Mediterranean:
NELSON, RENOWN, WARSPITE in the Gibraltar dock, and the
two French battleships RICHELIEU and LORRAINE.

Own Situation:

Six steamers (19,200 BRT) were escorted in four
convoys off the south coast of France.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

After a longish period of inactivity photographic
reconnaissance of harbors of southwest Italy was resumed
on 11 Dec. It was observed that the shipping in Naples
had decreased to 42 freighters totalling 262,000 BRT as
against the observations of 22 Nov. Shipping at Salerno,
Castellmare and Torre Anunziata, totalling 40,000 BRT,
was slight. The number of landing craft observed was strik-
ingly low, only nine in all.

Twelve to 14 merchant vessels were lying in Bari harbor on
the evening of 11 Dec.

On 12 Dec. our air reconnaissance sighted two merchant
vessels, two landing craft, westbound, 60 miles east of
Ustica, and four ships 50 miles south-southwest of Ajaccio,
course not mentioned.

Three destroyers and two guard boats were 145 miles east-
southeast of Malta, course 300 degrees.

Own Situation:

During the night of 11 Dec. the torpedo boats TA
"23", "24", three motor minssweepers and two PT boats carried
out the minelaying tasks "Condor" and "Wiesel" in the area
of Elba. Torpedo Boat TA "24" fought off an enemy attack
by enemy PT boats while approaching the operations area.
Owing to bad visibility and unfavorable weather conditions
the torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" could not proceed to the
Gulf of Bastia afterwards as planned.

The anti-submarine, minesweeping and convoy services were
carried out without special incident.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

A. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The Ban on the shipping route Split - Metkovic has been lifted. The Brac - Hvar Strait will be navigated in groups of two. On 8 Dec. at 2210 80 miles north-northwest of Brindisi the hospital ship GRADISCA was forced by two British destroyers to put in to Brindisi. The ship was forbidden to use her radio. One hundred and twenty-nine British (17 officers) and 824 Italians (35 officers) were disembarked. The ship was released on 9 Dec. at 1707 and put in to Venice with 42 German sick at noon on 11 Dec.

From the point of view of international law there is nothing against this procedure. However, there remains to be settled the question of whether it was practical to have Italians and British sail aboard a ship which was making a passage through enemy waters. The Group has been requested for its opinion on this matter.

The steamer CAGLIARI which ran aground off Rovigno has been refloated again.

The transfer of the Siebel ferries and infantry boats from the north Adriatic area depends on weather conditions. At present they are at Zara.

Admiral Adriatic Sea does not consider the transfer of the Staff from Belgrade to Mostar opportune at present. (See Radiogram 1159).

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 8 Dec. the British Admiralty announced the loss of the destroyer DULVERTON. This vessel was sunk by our Air Force in the Dodecanese on 13 Nov. Prisoners were taken.

One submarine was sighted in the areas of Levitha and Naxos on 11 Dec. at 0900 and on 12 Dec. at 1640 respectively. The first one fired on one of our auxiliary sailing vessels without causing any casualties.

During the night of 11 Dec. Syra Bay was again mined from the air. Early on the morning of 12 Dec. several planes attacked Suda Bay without result. It is suspected that mines were laid. After temporary closing of the bay traffic is again permitted with compulsory pilotage.

Own Situation:

No clearance successes were achieved in Iraklion harbor by minesweeping planes even though they crossed the area 40 times.

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Unescorted traffic of small ships in the Lemnos area has been sanctioned again.

The motor ship DRACHE, torpedo boats TA "14", "15", motor minesweeper R "211", PT boats S "55" and S "36" left Piraeus for Samos on the afternoon of 11 Dec.

Admiral, Aegean Sea reports that the mining from the air of the main harbors, important hid-out places and passages indicates systematic aerial minelaying by the enemy, and is assuming dangerous proportions on account of the lack of suitable craft for sweeping operations. For the time being only one out of every four minesweeping planes available is operational.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring six submarines were at sea. In addition, four PT boats, two gunboats, two minesweepers and one submarine were detected off the east coast.

Own Situation:

During the night of 11 Dec. motor minesweepers did not sight any enemy objectives in the Kerch Straits. Naval artillery lighter MAL "4" was slightly damaged as the result of fire from the enemy battery Kinburn at Pervomaisk.

During the night of 12 Dec. the patrol line in the southern Straits of Kerch will be manned by three naval landing craft.

Owing to a strong northeast wind minesweeping was broken off and convoys stopped. PT boat operations have been cancelled.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

A Russo-Czechoslovak treaty was signed in Moscow in the presence of Stalin and Benes. According to a German news report from Lisbon Churchill's return from the Mediterranean has been postponed from a while for health reasons.

According to a Transocean report Roosevelt's object at the Malte discussions was the transfer of further British warships to the Pacific. However, it is alleged that it was eventually agreed that a withdrawal of naval forces from the Mediterranean is out of the question.

According to a Turkish report Russia has recognized the Tito government.

The Chief, Naval Staff was at Blankenburg on tour of inspection.

Conference on the Situation With the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. According to a report from the Chief, Intelligence Division, Naval Staff Sunday work hitherto existing in U. S. dockyards has been limited to the production of landing craft.

II. Army Situation:

On the whole the situation was held. Our offensive operations in the Zhitomir area are drawing to a close.

Otherwise nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. From a memorandum recently submitted by the Commander, PT Boats on offensive and defensive operations by PT boats, it appears again that the equipment of PT boats with communications material is the deciding factor in the question of who shall command their operational engagements. The Commander, PT Boat explains that those boats which have only one radio operator, and thereby not in a position to cover traffic on the wavelengths of other units, can operate only on the special procedure from Commander, PT boats.

Fuehrer Directive 51 pointed out the necessity of intensifying counter-measures against imminent landings. In the course of this the PT boats may perhaps have to operate in our coastal zone more often than in the past. For this tactical co-operation with the defense forces is essential.

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In the view taken by Group West with regard to the report of Commander, PT Boats it was stressed that the command of the PT boats by a Defense Division could be facilitated if an officer on the Staff of Commander, PT Boats or the Commander himself, joined the staff of the Defense Division for the duration of operations. According to the view of Group West the best conditions will be achieved when the tactical command rests with Commander, PT Boats, who would then receive operational orders through the Defense Division.

The fact owing to their use of a special cypher the PT boats cannot communicate with other units is due to the special tasks for which they were designed. Now that the PT boats are required for other tasks this state of things is unsatisfactory. It is requested that - at first only within Naval Staff Circles, - investigations be made to see whether it would be possible, and if so, how, to alter this state of affairs.

Operations Division, Naval Staff asks the Chief of the Naval Communications Division for information on possible ways which might alter the state of affairs which has been described as unsatisfactory.

II. Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command transmitted a memorandum of a conference for information to the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command which tells of the successful hunt of a Russian submarine and its final destruction, as the result of an interplay of radio messages from military counter-espionage on the northern Varanger coast in coast in October 1943.

For copy as per 1/Skl 41373/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

Situation 13 Dec. 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from one of our submarines a steamer of the ANTILLA class was sighted in the square FD 5524, course north, high speed, on 9 Dec. On 10 Dec. the boat was observed by air reconnaissance. For two days a destroyer shadowed the boat. On 12 Dec. the boat was sighted by a searching cruiser of the CONCORD class with air reconnaissance in FL 15.

All ships in foreign waters were informed by Radiogram 1331.

GUS 23 left Gibraltar as scheduled and according to dead reckoning will be on position line from CE 87 to CG 51 on

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14 Dec. days's run 207 miles, course west.

The OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER gave been informed by Radiograms 1330 and 1332 respectively.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Fifty six planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay.

Between noon and evening eight locations of British vessels were reported in the reconnaissance area. Five planes of the Azores squadrons were detected on operations. At noon planes reported an attack by our planes in BF 7884 and 1594. At 0650 a plane reported sighting one of our submarines in BF.

At 1945 an enemy submarine was sighted in BF 5726.

At 1058 a Ju 290 detected a convoy 330 miles west-southwest of Cliffden by means of its radar gear and sighted seven merchant vessels on westerly courses through gaps in the clouds. At 0823 an FW 200 picked up a convoy with its radar gear about 260 miles west-southwest of Cliffden; no details were given.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One submarine was escorted in and one out.

On 11 Dec. 4,126 NRT of Spanish ore traffic were escorted. One mine was cleared off Brest.

Channel Coast:

Convoy traffic was carried out only in the Channel Islands area. Owing to the heavy sea, patrol positions were not manned. The defense service was limited to patrol of the coastal routes.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

Until now the eastbound convoy "1159" has gone according to plan. Ten convoys totalling about 90,000 BRT were escorted in the Zuider Zee and in Zeeland Waters.

In the morning strong U. S. bomber formations crossed the coastal zone of the Heligoland Bight to attack Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel. The planes returned by the same route. One plane was reported shot down by the naval anti-aircraft artillery at Wilhelmshaven.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Eight planes were detected operating over the sea area Orkneys and Faeroes, In the afternoon of 12 Dec. one plane was over Stavanger and one over Bergen.

Own Situation:

The commander and 23 of the crew were killed when the patrol boat "6106" was lost. It is possible the ship struck a mine.

A further search for the midget submarine in Bergen harbor remained without success though she was unmistakably sighted. The boat evidently succeeded in leaving the harbor unmolested by our forces.

On 12 Dec. a harbor defense boat sank in Oslo Fjord, after collision with a German tanker in the fog.

Forty ships were escorted north and 38 south. Six remained in port because of the lack of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea:I. Enemy Situation:

The Swedish fishing smack taken in to Roedvik was captured by a boat of the 8th Defense Flotilla between Falsterbo and Stevensklint. Nine demolition charges, Swedish newspapers, Jewish agitation and propaganda leaflets in German, Swedish and Danish, as well as a box with letters addressed to 300 Danish addresses were captured. The Security Service considers this material is usually valuable.

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The Foreign Office intends to lodge a protest with the Swedish government. For details see Teletype 1715 as well as War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.

2. Own Situation:

About 100 to 150 U. S. planes took part in the raid on Kiel on the afternoon of 12 Dec. attacking in several waves through ten-tenths cloud. The Germania dockyard and the Howaldt dockyard did not suffer any damage. The damage inflicted on the Deutsche Werke cannot yet be assessed. The torpedo boat T "15" sank in the dockyard after receiving a direct hit. The JACOBI suffered considerable splinter damage. Fires which broke out were extinguished. The repair work will probably take until May. Incendiaries dropped on the KOELN and the ERWIN WASSNER were extinguished immediately. A shed containing naval rating's equipment in the Naval Arsenal was completely destroyed.

An ELM/J was cleared off Schleimünde.

Othrrwise no special events to report from the Baltic area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to radio monitoring a plane reported the sighting of a periscope in ED 9957.

2. Own Situation:

The air reconnaissance for Group "Colonel" consisted of three long-range reconnaissance planes detected the convoy at 0830 in AL 9931 and at 1200 in AL 9198, course unknown, and at 2000 in AL 9942, course west. Thus the awaited convoy was outside and to the east of our reconnaissance area on 12 Dec. This confirms that the reconnaissance area was too small.

The eight most southern boats of Group "Colonel" 2 were ordered to try to contact the enemy by sailing at maximum speed, course 210 degrees.

Otherwise nothing of special interest to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day single planes were reported approaching the coast.

In the afternoon a strong formation consisting of 250 bombers escorted by about 350 fighters attacked the air port at Schiphol (Amsterdam). The majority of the bombs fell on the landing field; for damage see Daily Situation. One plane was reported shot down.

2. German Reich Territory:

In the afternoon hours two strong enemy formations approached the north and west for an attack on Bremen. A second formation approached from the Heligoland Bight, penetrated the area Wesermuende - Wilhelmshaven making for Hamburg, which was attacked between 1220 and 1326. A second formation approached from the Heligoland Bight by way of Heligoland making for Kiel which was attacked between 0800 and 1318. A diversionary formation consisting of about 100 planes, probably fighters flew over the Air Force Administrative Command Holland as far as Muenster, Bielefeld, and Osnabrueck without carrying out attacks. A further formation consisting of 200 to 250 fighters flew over the Dutch area as fighter cover. Up till now it has been reported that two planes were shot down; a third plane crashed.

In Bremen two steamers and one motor vessel were sunk in the harbor, as also a dock in the Europa harbor. Damage caused to naval installations in Kiel has already been reported. There is no report from Hamburg.

In the evening single planes entered German Reich territory. Three bombs were dropped on Bonn and 12 on Duesseldorf.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

In the area of the 2nd Air Force our forces carried out reconnaissance only.

About 300 enemy planes are operating in the front area.

Three planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery and three planes by fighters.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast 21 bombers took off to attack enemy ships in Bari. Detailed reports have not yet been received. The enemy carried out reconnaissance in the Aegean Sea and nuisance raids in the area of Rimini, north of Ancona.

One enemy plane was shot down by fighters near Milos.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

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Enemy Situation:

On 12 Dec. 13 planes were operating in the Gibraltar area and 33 in the North African area.

The U. S. convoy which entered the Mediterranean on 11 Dec. was detected by radio location in the area east of Oran. A westbound U. S. convoy was in the Philippeville - Bougie area on the evening of 13 Dec.

After fresh investigation it appears the report submitted on 12 Dec. stating that the RENOWN had arrived in the Mediterranean was really the KING GEORGE V which has put in to Gibraltar. The arrival of this ship and the unusually strong patrol of the Straits must be connected with Churchill's return.

On 11 Dec. at 1300 a landing craft of unidentified type, allegedly 12,000 BRT and filled with troops, put in to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean.

During the night of 11 Dec. Tres Forcas and Tangier reported a large vessel, probably a cruiser, with 2-3 escort vessels, proceeding west.

At noon on 12 Dec. radio monitoring detected two convoys in the Algiers area, one eastbound, and the other without indication of course. A retrospective report from 11 Dec. states that a British cruiser left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean and that four British and six probably U. S. destroyers passed through the Straits in a westerly direction.

In the evening of 13 Dec. a convoy consisting of 19 freighters coming from the Mediterranean passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, course west.

Own Situation:

Six steamers totalling 2,600 BRT were escorted in two convoys off the south coast of France.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 12 Dec., the coast of the Gulf of Gaeta was shelled from the sea. The convoy consisting of 40 merchant ships and six destroyers reported by air reconnaissance northwest of Ischia on the evening of 12 Dec. was not located again; it probably put in to Naples.

Reconnaissance on the morning of 13 Dec. did not result in any enemy sightings worth mentioning.

Own Situation:

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Owing to unfavorable weather conditions our operations were postponed. Convoy traffic was interrupted. The transfer of the motor minesweepers by way of Genoa - Po to the Adriatic is proceeding according to plan.

In the course of the enemy air attack on Benedetto, the Naval Motor Transport Battalion engaged on emergency coast protection succeeded in shooting down two planes.

On 7 Dec. submarine U "73" reported a triple miss at a destroyer and a Zaunkoenig at a frigate; as a result of the latter an explosion was heard after 14 minutes 8 seconds. On 13 Dec. in CH 8448 a destroyer crossed over the boat and tore its quadruple gun.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 0155 two destroyers passed Bar at a distance of 3 miles at high speed, course north; they turned southwards at 0230.

Three coastal freighters were sighted 43 miles east of Termoli, course southeast, and one merchantship 38 miles northeast of Termoli, course southwest.

Own Situation:

The operation NA 2 against partisan naval craft was not carried out during the night of 11 Dec. because of enemy gun fire. The operation was to be repeated during the of 12 Dec. No report has yet been received.

Admiral, Adriatic reports that the transfer of the staff of Admiral Adriatic has been postponed until further notice. Commanding Admiral, Adriatic will control the whole area from Mostar. The staff remains in Belgrade as before.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 12 Dec. at 2100 a submarine sank a Greek auxiliary sailing vessel proceeding from Lemnos to Mytilene.

On 13 Dec. four enemy planes carried out an ineffective low-level attack on the steamer ISIS and escort in Santorin, using bombs and machine-guns.

A similar ineffective attack was directed against the convoy of the steamer SIFNOS. Air reconnaissance detected the convoy of the minelayer DRACHE proceeding to Samos with German troops.

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Own Situation:

The convoy of the minelayer DRACHE left Samos at 1500 with 1,500 prisoners and 200 German soldiers, bound for Piraeus.

Otherwise there are no special reports.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to a radio monitoring one submarine was probably destroyed by our submarine chaser U "103" in the course of the submarine hunt west of Eupatoria on 4 Dec.

Own Situation:

On the afternoon of 12 Dec. the steamer LOLA 1,193 BRT) caught fire in Sevastopol. The fire was extinguished.

Admiral, Black Sea reports that the main operations area of the enemy submarines remains the sea area off Tarchankutsh and Eupatoria Bay, and considers it necessary to combat them with the utmost tenacity until their final destruction in order to prevent further losses of ships in connection with supplies to the Crimea. Admiral, Black Sea has therefore sent out two further submarine chasers to the Sevastopol-Eupatoria area on the anti-submarine patrol. The boats may not return to port without the approval of the Admiral.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

The Russo-Czech treaty, which may be regarded as the future safeguard against any German advance eastwards leaves it to Poland to join the alliance. The Russian commentary, which stresses that the treaty has definitely put an end to the various intrigues which aimed at the creation of a safety zone along Russia's western frontier, is more ambiguous. British newspapers reprint further Russian commentaries according to which the Kremlin confirmed by this treaty that Russia is determined to play an important part on the continent after the war. The Times advises the Polish not to reject the offer.

The Russian Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announces that the following the British example, a Russian military commission will be sent to Tito.

Conference on the Situation With the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Office reports that the consequences of the special assignment III action on the dockyards - mainly in the shipbuilding sector - were reported to Chief Manager Merker.

According to a further report, list I of the naval building project was approved by the Commissioner General for Building.

II. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division reports that according to the report of the Military Attache in Ankara Marshal Tschakmak will resign in the course of 1944 when he reaches the age limit.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.III. Army Situation:

On the eastern front our counterattack southeast of Krivoro-grad was frustrated. The enemy succeeded in encircling the southern wing of our front to the northwest. Counterattacks are in progress. Our main line of resistance was withdrawn in the area of Cherkassy.

A new strong enemy attack in the area of Nevel resulted in several penetrations.

IV. Report from Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Div.:

a. Group West reports that according to information received from the Air Commander, Atlantic the time granted for the raise of the technical readiness of his long-range reconnaissance planes starting 15 Dec. was reduced again by further demands from Commanding Admiral, Submarines, so that the number of plans for the projected blockade-

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running tasks will fall below the minimum required, even if no further losses occur. As regards air reconnaissance, the condition for the success of this operation no longer exists. The Group asks for a decision as to whether the demands of Commanding Admiral, Submarines may be waived in favor of the task of Group West.

The Chief, Naval Staff has decided that the operation for Commanding Admiral, Submarines on 15 Dec. is a compelling necessity and that forces will be free for blockade-running tasks beginning 16 Dec.

Group West and Naval Staff, Submarine Division will be informed to this effect.

b. The operation "Herbstgewitter" in the Adriatic will commence on 16 Dec.

The Chief, Naval Staff agrees that the submarine U "596" shall be re-called from its present operational area so that at least three days are left clear for "Herbstgewitter", and that submarine U "81" shall be provided with Zeunkoenig equipment for the operation in the Adriatic.

For order to this effect 1/Skl I u 3693/43 Gkdos. Chefs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

V. Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that according to information received by the Admiral attached to Fuehrer Headquarters the Fuehrer has not yet decided regarding the engagement of the Batteries "Lindemann" and "Todt" on a long-range shelling operation.

VI. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff refers to an Intelligence report from an officer in the area of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West regarding the attitude of these troops to the handing over of the ships of the 4th Patrol Boat Flotilla to the Grossi unit. Their main objection is to the boats being under command of Italian officers. For copy as per 1/skl 42252/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

The Chief, Naval Staff demands an official report from Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West.

Special Items.

With regard to the question of the new type of fleet torpedo boat "41 A", and destroyer "42A" (see War Diary 28 Nov.) raised by the Ship Building Commission, the following view of the Naval Staff was submitted for approval by the Chief of the Naval Staff after a discussion between Operations Division, Naval Staff and Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff on 14 Dec.:

I. Fleet Torpedo Boats type 41 A.

On the basis of demands for heavier armament by the Fleet and Commander, Destroyers some time ago, it was proposed to equip the Fleet Torpedo Boats 41 with six 10.5 cm KM 44 twin mountings instead of four 10.5 cm single mountings. This resulted in the construction of the new type 41 A Fleet Torpedo Boat. Owing to the heavier armament the displacement was increased by about 60 tons, the breadth was enlarged by 0.2 m while the speed was reduced to 33.5 knots. In accordance with the proposal of the Bureau of Naval Construction Division, Naval Armament the oil-supply was to be decreased by 60 tons, thereby restoring the former speed of 34 knots, at the same time reducing the radius of action by approximately 400 nautical miles.

Operations Division, Naval Staff attaches great importance to a strong armament and is prepared to accept a reduction of speed if it is necessary.

2. Destroyer Type 42 A.

In May 1943 the Chief of the Naval Construction Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reported to the High Command, Navy that an increase of speed could not be achieved by a transition from steam destroyers to engine-propelled destroyers even if the number of motors were increased from 4 to 6. However, a subsequent calculation resulted in an increase of 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

Even the difficulties feared regarding the bedplate proved groundless. The transition to eight engines with the necessarily resulting increase of displacement allowed at the same time for the demands for reinforced armament. The risk of the transition to engine-propelled destroyers remains the same with six as with eight engines.

Naval Staff thus considers the project with eight engines best and is prepared to accept the probably decrease in production from four to three destroyers.

In order to remain independent of the deadlines for the delivery of the new 12.8 turrets it is suggested that an artillery armament of 6-12.8 cm guns be provided in one 12.8 cm turret each and one 12.8 cm single-mounting forward and aft in accordance with the request of Commander, Destroyers. In this way it will be possible to place 12.8 cm guns aboard in single mountings, if the deliveries of the turrets are delayed.

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Situation 14 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty three planes were detected operating in the outer Bay of Biscay. One plane was observed in the area of the Azores. British vessels were located as follows: at 1906 in AM 0277, at 1955, in AM 5257 at 2032 in AM 4340 and at 2232 in AM 5350.

In the Channel area an objective was located by radar in the Nore Command at 2345.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Two submarines were escorted in and one out.

Channel Coast:

At 1330 and 1530 the battery at Boulogne was bombed and machine gunned by enemy planes. No damage was caused. On the evening of 13 Dec. a sentry near Ostend was attacked by an unknown assailant armed with a German stick hand grenade without success.

III. North Sea, Northy, Northern Waters:

I. North Sea:

On 13 Dec. one mine was cleared off Den Helder, one off Esbjerg, one off Norderney and Heligoland. The eastbound convoy Hook - Elbe was carried out. The convoy "472" Elbe - Hook started with four steamers (14,312 BRT) at 0900. Four convoys totalling about 58,000 BRT were carried out in Zealand Waters. Altogether 87,388 BRT were escorted by the forces in the region of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West on 14 Dec.

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2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Thirty three planes were detected operating over the North Sea. At noon on 12 Dec. sounds of engines was repeatedly located off Petsamo Fjord. On the morning of 13 Dec. two planes were sighted in the vicinity of Petsamo.

According to a German Intelligence Report, at 1830 on 13 Dec. a submarine was sighted at sea west of Bergen heading for the Lokeyosen. PT boats were sent out to hunt the submarine. In the afternoon one plane was in the Bergen area.

Own Situation:

Thirty three ships were escorted north and 38 ships south. Eighteen ships were delayed owing to the lack of escort vessels.

At 1519 Admiral, Northern Coast ordered boats to make for protected anchorages as the appearance of carrier-borne planes between Stadlandet and Edoe had to be reckoned with.

The cause for this order is not known.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report a new PT boat operation for the transport of ball-bearings from Sweden to Great Britain is imminent. On 16 Dec. 8.5 tons of ball-bearings are to be shipped from Stockholm to Lysekil from where they will be transported to G. Britain by PT boats. (See telegram 2305).

Several objectives were detected northeast of Tuettters between 1900 and 2020.

2. Own Situation:

One ELM/J was cleared in the area of Revnes, .

On 13 Dec. the 3rd Armored Corps took over command on the front of the encircled Oranienbaum pocket and the responsibility for the coast protection west of the Oranienbaum pocket near Merekuela. The Corps Headquarters is at Kolpizy, the Corps Headquarters of the 50th Armored Corps is at Ivanovka. The command area of the Leningrad front remained unchanged.

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For short report issued by the Naval Command, East on the damage caused by the enemy air raid on Kiel on 13 Dec. see Telegram 2005.

V. Submarine Warfare.

From the west Atlantic U "129" reports the sinking of a steamer of 6,000 BRT, and of a destroyer in the northern approaches to the Straits of Florida. The boat reports strong air- and sea patrol with location, small fast convoys and singly-proceeding ships.

From the Indian Ocean the submarine U "178" reports small convoys with strong escort and fast singly-proceeding ships off Madras as well as weak air- and sea patrol; there were, however, no opportunities for an attack.

Those boats of Group "Coronel" operating in southerly direction were ordered as Group "Coronel III" to proceed further to the south with maximum speed on the surface and to submerge only if enemy planes appeared. The Group is to occupy the patrol line from BD 3995 to 3878 as from 1900 on 15 Dec.

Six boats of Group "Coronel" operating in the north will form Group "Coronel I" which will occupy the position line from AK 3291 to 3477 at 1900 on 15 Dec. and the position line from AK 3174 to 2631 on 16 Dec. at 1900.

Nine central boats of the Group will form Group "Coronel II", which is assigned the position lines from AK 3783 to 6287 and AK 0289 to 6712 respectively, to be occupied at the above mentioned times.

The boats of Group "Coronel II" reported during the night of 14 Dec. that it was impossible to reach the position because of a heavy southerly storm.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day light enemy air forces carried out bombing attacks on the building site in the Abbeville area and on the building site northeast of Hestin.

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2. German Reich Territory:

Nothing to report.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our air forces were sent out on reconnaissance.

By day the enemy attacked Civitavecchia and the railroad in the Orte area.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast enemy air attacks were directed against Sibenice; the airfields of Tatoi, Calamaki and the harbor of Piraeus were subjected to strong attacks. Fifteen reconnaissance planes were observed in the Aegean. Altogether two Fortresses were shot down in the area of Air Force Command, Southeast. Nine of our aircraft were slightly damaged on the ground. The majority of our planes were removed from the airfields in time.

4. Eastern Front:

A Do 24 sea-rescue plane on ferry flight was shot down by two enemy planes in the exit to North Fjord.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 13 Dec. the convoy UGS 25 was detected in the area of Oran, while the convoy GUS 24 was detected in the area of Philippeville. During the night of 14 Dec. a westbound U. S. convoy was sailing west of Oran.

During the night of 12 Dec. a French transport and a freighter left Gibraltar on unknown course. the morning of 13 Dec. two French transports arrived at Malaga and took aboard 1550 French refugees liable for military service.

On 14 Dec. three large steamers and three escort vessels were north of Zrzeu, course west.

The Naval Intelligence Division reported on shipping in the Mediterranean ports since mid-October as follows: Gibraltar 250-370,000 BRT, on 13 Dec. 290,000 BRT. Shipping is normal, though the average is lower than in the summer. This must be put down to the fact that since the establishment of the North African ports Gibraltar is no longer a base but a mere port of call.

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As regards the Algerian ports there is only data for Algiers and Oran from October and November. At that time shipping was normal, amounting to 200 and 270,000 BRT respectively.

Own Situation:

At 1605 an ore tender sank in the harbor of Monaco as the result of an explosion, probably caused by a torpedo hit; the personnel suffered casualties.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Two destroyers, one escort vessel and two cruisers (Probably destroyers, too) were reported northeast of Benedetto on southerly courses, time not mentioned.

Otherwise nothing to report.

According to the observations of the Naval Intelligence Division there has been only slight shipping in Sardinia and Corsica since mid-October. On the Italian west coast in the area of Naples shipping sank down from 450,000 BRT in October to 300,000 BRT at the beginning of November. 300,000 to 400,000 BRT were observed on the Italian east coast in Taranto, Brindisi and Bari. The latter number must be considered the limit of normal occupation. There are no details available on Sicily, Tunis, Malta and Tripolis.

No shipping worth mentioning was detected in Cyrenaica.

Own Situation:

On 13 Dec. at 1037 the submarine U "596" attacked a freighter of 7,000 BRT and a destroyer with a four-fan in CJ 9953; both vessels probably sank.

The execution of the minelaying tasks was again postponed on account of unfavorable weather conditions. Convoy traffic was carried out according to plan.

The minelayer NIEDERSACHEN (ex Aquila) was commissioned at La Spezia on 12 Dec.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

On 13 Dec. our base at Ulcinj was lightly shelled

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by two enemy destroyers without success. During the night of 12 Dec. Trepanj was shelled by destroyers and subsequently by PT boats. During the same night partisans raided the headquarters of the Port Commander on the isle of Sipan. The partisans withdrew taking Croatian policemen with them.

Biograd has been occupied by our troops since 11 Dec. The Pasman Channel is therefore again open to shipping.

After the landing on Pag the enemy withdrew in a south-easterly direction. A boat with four partisans was sunk.

With regard to the Bauxite transport Admiral Adriatic reports that the situation is unchanged owing to the postponement of the island operation south of Split to 16 Dec. Enemy air activity over the coastal zone and our harbors continues owing to the lack of fighter protection and anti-aircraft artillery, as does the patrol activity by enemy destroyers from the Otranto Straits as far as Dubrovnik, immediately off our own coast.

b. Aegean Sea:

An escort vessel with ships in tow was attacked by four enemy PT boats while sailing from Simi to Rhodes. One escort vessel and one minelayer sank. According to a report from Admiral, Aegean all survivors were wounded by the fire of enemy machine-guns directed against the shipwrecked.

A further investigation is necessary in order to learn the real facts. In the majority of cases of this kind reported so far it turned out there was no intentional violation of international law by the enemy, but that those concerned had a subjective impression that they were being fired at, whereas in reality the enemy fire was directed against their craft still afloat, or in another direction. Thus we must wait for the result of the examination. Then the necessary measures with the Fuehrer must be taken in conjunction with the Foreign Office.

PT Boats S "36" and "55" arrived in Piraeus from Samos at 0245.

The airfields of Tatoi and Calamaki are unserviceable as a result of the heavy air attacks reported. The attacks on Piraeus did not cause any special damage in the dock area. The jetty and the fuel tank installations in the submarine base were damaged. A coal lighter sank. The minelayer DRACHE was damaged by the blast and will be out of action probably until 17 Dec. Aerial mines were probably dropped in the Bay of Salmis. A mineweeping operation is planned.

On Leros the battery "Helgoland" with four 15.2 cm guns and the battery "Sylt" with four 10.2 cm guns were reported ready for action.

c. Black Sea:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

On 13 and 14 Dec. the city and harbor of Otchakov were several times subjected to artillery fire. Some lighters were damaged in the course of an air attack on this harbor. A convoy between Constanta and Sevastopol was vainly attacked by four enemy planes. One of the attacking planes was shot down.

During the night of 14 Dec. six PT boats will be sent out from Ivanbaba for operations off the Caucasus coast.

Submarine U "23" left Constanta on enemy patrol.

As regards the land situation the 17th Army Headquarters reports increasing enemy artillery activity and tank movements on the Perekop front.

The Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff reported that the 4th Air Force was assigned a squadron of BV 138's, a squadron of AR 196's and some further BV 138's for the protection of convoys in the Black Sea against enemy submarines. The BV's are detached from the areas of the 3rd and 5th Air Force.

The following is a report from the Naval Staff to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Navy) on craft available.

"I. Number of submarine chasers at present available in the Black Sea: 34, including six war transports and 25 armed fishing vessels.

2. By the end of March six war transports and eleven armed fishing vessels as well as 19 armed fishing vessels to be brought from Germany. Of the armed fishing vessel - submarine chasers six are being prepared for transfer to the Aegean through the Dardanelles.

3. No transfer of monitors from the Danube to the Black Sea for the reinforcement of the convoy escort forces can be reckoned with. The Danube monitors are only in a restricted sense seaworthy. In addition to this their transfer would be inexcusable since the reinforcement of the Danube patrol by the preparation of auxiliary monitors as ordered by the Fuehrer, is only in a limited degree possible on account of shortage of vessels."

Pn 13 Dec. Admiral, Black Sea pointed out that the situation in the Crimea makes an early detection of enemy landing

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operations necessary; this is possible only by constant air reconnaissance of all the Caucasus ports. During the month of October reconnaissance of the harbors was carried out only three times, and in November only once, so that for the time being there is no data on the distribution of forces and the movements of enemy warships and merchantmen. The enemy is therefore able to appear unexpectedly on the coast of the Crimea with strong forces.

Thus Admiral, Black Sea again requests reconnaissance of the Caucasus ports and coast every third day, providing the weather conditions are favorable. Odessa is considered an unfavorable base for reconnaissance during the winter, because of the frequent foggy weather; he requests that suitable reconnaissance planes be based in the Crimea itself.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff (Navy). The Commander in Chief, Air Force discussed the matter with the 4th Air Force. The wishes of Admiral, Black Sea will be complied with as far as possible. It would be best if Admiral, Black Sea could settle such questions with the 4th Air Force direct.

It remains to be seen what the practical consequences of the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff's consent will be.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

According to a report in the Swedish press the Finnish peace discussions have ceased. The possibility of a Finnish peace proposal and its desirability is no longer being discussed.

In the course of the opening of the war debate in the House of Commons Eden representing the still absent Churchill made a detailed statement on the last conference in Cairo and Teheran. Nothing fresh has become known.

The British press has begun to criticize the execution of the campaign in Italy more sharply. The Daily Mail writes that the air superiority in Europe was greatly overrated whereas the difficulties of warfare were underrated. From the German point of view the Italian campaign appeared as a good strategic investment, whereas from the Allied viewpoint it was a very poor one.

At a press conference Knox declared that preparations for a major offensive in the Pacific are in progress. The Allies were about to deal some heavy blows. Important units of the Japanese fleet and air force had been destroyed gradually in the minor warfare which had taken place so far, whereas the success reports of the Japanese were only of propagandist importance. In the course of the past months only skirmishes took place in the Pacific which turned out favorably for the Allies. There is no question of large-scale sea- and air combats.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff

I. Report by the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff regarding the command organization in the area of Group North/Fleet in connection with the Fuehrer Directive 51 on the basis of discussions with the Chief of Staff, Group North/Fleet on 10 Dec. in accordance with the notice in the War Diary of 11 Dec. (See Conferences on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff II).

The Chief, Naval Staff agreed to the proposal. For order to this effect from Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

There is a further report by the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff as to the proposal made by the Commanding Admiral, Naval Command, Norway regarding the creation of a joint Armed Forces, Operations Staff in Norway.

The proposal is worded as follows:

"The directive of the Fuehrer aimed at the saving of personnel leads me to suggest a joint Armed Forces, Operations Staff in Norway:

I. Advantages:

1. Concentration of all military forces in Norway in one hand, thereby achieving an intensified defensive - and offensive force.

2. Simplifying of the project for the reinforcement of the defense of the whole area and its execution.

3. Stronger representation of the Armed Forces with the civil authorities and better utilization of the forces employed by the latter.

4. The previous occurrences of discord and doubling-up of work among the three branches of the Armed Forces all working along their own lines would cease.

5. Considerable saving of personnel in the command and administration.

II. The geographical situation and peculiarity of the area which can be attacked only from the sea makes the appointment of a naval officer as Chief of the Operations Staff appear most appropriate. Because of the great number of Army troops and offensive operations on the land an Army Officer is best suited to be Chief of Staff.

III. A change in the organization, even shortly before the expected attack is no disadvantage, as a gradual transition is possible and the change assists the closest collaboration of all branches of the Armed Forces, which could be achieved only with difficulty in the so-far existing organization.

IV. A fundamental decision or a report on the view taken is requested. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, North has not been informed yet. It is considered likely that the Commanding General, Armed Forces, North, too, is trying to achieve a far reaching simplification of the complicated military command organization in Norway in proposals submitted to the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, endeavoring to fill the most important command posts almost exclusively with Army officers."

The Chief, Naval Staff has approved the following reply, which is in the negative:

"After thorough investigation of your proposal I feel convinced that neither saving of personnel nor the advantages expected will in fact result. If the appointment of Commanding General, Armed Forces, North is held by a naval officer with an Armed Forces, Operations Staff, the Army will not

sacrifice its Army High Command and will instead simply transfer its personnel, which would be to the disadvantage of the Navy. Also the Navy will have to fully maintain the Naval Command. Possibilities of friction will hardly be avoided, but will merely shift. But even if certain simplifications could be expected I could not consent to this proposal for fundamental considerations. The northern area of operations, and Norway as the base of Naval warfare, belong together and cannot be detached from the naval war as a whole. Thus the handing over of the naval base of Norway to the Armed Forces, Operations Staff must be rejected because of the disadvantage to the naval war. The problem cannot be solved satisfactorily by the maintenance of the Naval High Command with dual subordination to both the Commanding General, Armed Forces, North and the Naval Staff for naval operations; or, as it is at the present being tried without success in the Mediterranean, with dual subordination of the Commanding General, Armed Forces to both the High Command of the Armed Forces and the Naval Staff. As far as the seams between two command areas - in this case naval warfare and land defense, can be satisfactorily handled at all as regards operational organization, I consider the Fuehrer Directive 40 is still the best solution, providing for the present existing organization of separated branches of the Armed Forces, and the position of the Commanding General, Armed Forces as a territorial commander. The assumption of entire responsibility for the land defense by a naval officer, and de facto by the Navy, is not in agreement with my views."

II. Shipping and Transport Branch, Quartermaster Division, Chief, Naval Staff has summarized the transport situation in the area of Naval Group South. The view taken by that office was transmitted to the Quartermaster, Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command by teletype on 7 Dec. For details, particularly on the question of supplies to the Crimea, see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a. (compare 1/Skl 3605/43 Gkdos. Chfs. 41181/43 Gkdos., 3538 and 3455/43 Gkdos. Chfs. and others.)

Chief, Naval Staff will take along this message as data for his next report to the Fuehrer. For copy see War Diary "Items for Discussion".

III. Report from Operations Division, Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Naval Staff on the situation in the southwest Pacific, based on reports from the Attaches in Tokyo, and information received by the Naval Staff from the Japanese Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Naval Staff.

IV. Report from Rear Admiral Ruge, Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army Group B, on the journey made by Field Marshall Rommel to Denmark.

The impression made by the Navy was good, in part exceptionally good. Field Marshal Rommel intends to employ naval alarm units under the command of Admiral Denmark in areas from which army troops can be withdrawn, and requests that the troops be brought by sea, since the railroad is already overburdened by

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the Army. The alarm units are to be moved as tactical units to new main assembly points to be fixed by Admiral Denmark in agreement with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Denmark.

Some of the demands will be difficult to fulfil. Chief, Naval Staff has ordered the details to be discussed with the QM Division, Naval Staff. The employment of the Commanding Admiral, Denmark as intended by Field Marshal Rommel is impracticable, especially as Admiral, Denmark is also needed for the tasks of Group North.

With regard to the material demands, the reinforcement of the Skagerrak minefields will be taken into consideration.

Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff states that this is planned for the spring of 1944. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff stresses that the reinforcement of the minefields as a barrage for rearward protection of Army Group B is impossible, and considers it necessary to warn Rommel's Staff against overestimation of the effectiveness of the barrages and the engagement of naval forces. Use of the mines destined for the mining of the Gulf of Finland is out of the question.

Rear Admiral Ruge further points out that even a 12 to 24 hours' delay, which the enemy would require for the clearance of mines, would be of great value. Besides that he reports that co-operation with Field Marshal Rommel is good. Field Marshal Rommel reported to the Armed Forces High Command on the results of his tour of the Danish area. This report is not available to the remaining authorities of the Armed Forces.

Mobilization and Organization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff issued the following order to Naval Command, East and Admiral, Denmark:

"I. According to the report from Admiral Ruge to the Commander in Chief, Navy on the journey of Field Marshal Rommel to Denmark, transport of naval alarm units to the assembly points appointed by Admiral, Denmark by railroad is out of the question. It is requested that the troops be transported by sea to new port assembly points.

2. Admiral Denmark will fix the new assembly points accordingly and in agreement with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Denmark and will report them to the High Command, Navy and to the Naval Commands, East and North for information along with the code name and numerical capacity. After having conferred with Group North, the Naval Command, East will submit proposals to the High Command, Navy on the practicability of the operation as well as the means of transportation available for it.

The Naval Command, East will be responsible for its execution as far as transportation is concerned; this will probably be arranged partly by mobilization methods. partly by a.

operational methods. Alarm units from near-by localities will be transported to the assembly points in rubber boats.

3. The assembly points so far reported by Admiral, Denmark remain valid until Naval Command, East reports the completion of the preparations in accordance with paragraph 2)."

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

V. Report of Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff:

a. The views on the Crimean supply situation addressed to the Army General Staff have been submitted to the Chief, Naval Staff. For copy of the letter 1/Skl 3666/43 Gkdos. Chofs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

b. Group West submitted plans for the long-range reconnaissance operation to bring in the blockade-runners. The full utilization of this reconnaissance for submarine operations in the same area seems to be inadvisable as experience has shown that submarines attract enemy planes. Chief, Naval Staff agrees with this view and has already decided on a submarine disposition which will have a diversionary effect.

VI. Army Situation:

The main thrusts of the enemy follow the lines from Kiev southwest to the Bug river, and from the area of Nevel in direction of Riga. The rest of the operations are to be regarded only as relief attacks. Meanwhile the attack in the region of Nevel has begun.

The defensive battle in the area of Krementchuk is coming to an end. On the whole our front was held. Our offensive operation in the area north of Zhitomir has ceased. Those units able to fight are being withdrawn in order to assemble them against the expected main attacks. The first days of the new large-scale offensive have proceeded quite favorably.

Situation 15 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The OSORNO was informed in Radiogram 0310 that the torpedo boats and destroyers will wait at Point Cita for six hours and will then proceed as far as 8 degrees West, course 90 degrees, speed 21 knots. The OSORNO was furthermore informed that in the opinion of the Naval Staff the report from one of our own submarines submitted on 9 Dec. (See War Diary 13 Dec.) concerned the OSORNO.

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The RIO GRANDE, WESERLAND and BURGENLAND have received sailing instructions for the South Atlantic. For copy of the radiogram as per 1/Skl I k 3700, 3703 and 3704/43 respectively Gkdes Chefs. See War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty five planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay and ten planes in the area of the Azores. One British vessel was located at 2021 in AM 6880 and one at 2202 in AK 9910.

According to radio intelligence a plane of the 19th Group reported two merchant ships in BF 5885, course 30 degrees, speed 10 knots at 2340 and on 16 Dec. at 0227 three merchantment with obscure position in the same square, course 180 degrees, speed 7 knots.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Two submarines were escorted out and one submarine in.

Channel Coast:

The patrol positions were not manned because of the moon-lit night. Minelaying operations by the 2nd, 6th and 8th PT Boat Flotillas were broken off after the boats had left port because of the sudden appearance of fog.

Special Items.

Group West has informed Operations Division, Naval Staff of the instructions from Commanding General, Armed Forces, West regarding the mounting of artillery under concrete. The Fuehrer complained that this mounting on the coast was proceeding too slowly. The High Command ordered an answer to the following questions as soon as possible:

- a. What progress has been made so far?
- b. What are the reasons for any delays which have arisen?

Group West has reported in compliance with this request. For copy as per 1/Skl 42189/43 Gkdes. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. X.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

The convoy "472" Elbe -Hook was continued after a short stop in Den Helder. At 1400 the convoy of the blockade runner "32" started from Cuxhaven for the Hook.

Two mines were cleared north of Borkum and two north of Vlieland. Four convoys totalling 28,142 BRT were escorted in Zealand Waters.

Special Items.

In the course of a conference with the Armed Forces High Command in Copenhagen on 16/17 Nov. it was decided to secure Danish fishing smacks for the camouflaged surveillance of certain areas in the North Sea as a III F - operation. The Naval Staff considers this operations should be put into execution as soon as possible.

According to a report from the Counter Intelligence Section, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command, the preparations for the operation have progressed so far as to make the start possible by mid-or end of January, provided that the economic and financial conditions are complied with. Front line quarters will not be informed until the financing is guaranteed.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Twenty one planes were detected operating over the North Sea. According to radio intelligence several movements of LCT's were observed in the area of Hartlepool, Granton and Flamborough Head.

Two planes flew over the area of Vardoe on 14 Dec.

Own Situation:

The submarine hunt by PT boats west of Bergen was broken off, no results were achieved.

Twenty eight ships were escorted north and 41 ships south. Seventeen ships remained in harbor owing to lack of escort vessels.

The Sabotage Section, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command plans an operation against the Faeroes to be undertaken by an agent. It is proposed to carry out a sabotage attack against the oil-bunker in Thorshavn as the main task, and an attack on loading installations and enemy shipping as further, or secondary, tasks.

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As desired, Operations Division, Naval Staff confirmed these tasks as an order from the Naval Staff. For copy of the order 1/Skl 42014/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

One mine was cleared northwest of Hesseloe and two mines in the inner Danzig Bay. The passage east of Helsinki was closed to shipping because of suspicion of mines.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

V. Submarine Warfare.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence the U. S. steamer K.C.T.G. reported with SS at 0452 on 16 Dec. that she was being fired on by a submarine in BE 1944.

2. Own Situation:

According to radio intelligence the ON convoy should proceed on a course of 224 degrees on 12 Dec. Group "Colonel III" was ordered to push forward to the south beyond the ordered patrol line in order to control that area too. This is deemed possible if the enemy considerably reduced his sailing speed because of the southwest storm.

Otherwise nothing special to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day minor forces carried out attacks in Holland and in Western France against an airfield and a building site. During the night no enemy planes were reported over the occupied western territories.

2. German Reich Territory:

In the noon hours 200 Fortresses flew over the area of Bolzano via the Adriatic: 60 planes carried out an attack on Innsbruck, directed against the traffic junctions there. An enemy fighter formation joined the attacking planes over Innsbruck. Our anti-aircraft and fighter activity achieved no success. Railway- and signal communication installations were damaged. For details of further attacks see Daily Situation.

Early in the evening about 15 Mosquitos flew over the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial area, while late in the evening single planes flew over the area south of Przemysl from the south, probably in order to drop propaganda leaflets.

3. Mediterranean Area:

In the area of the 2nd Air Force our planes were sent out on reconnaissance only. Two enemy planes were shot down over the frontal zone.

In addition to the attack on Innsbruck the enemy carried out attacks against traffic installations and airfields in Bolzano and Trento.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast the airfield of Mostar was subjected to an attack. One of the attacking planes was shot down. Five of our planes were damaged. Further enemy planes were detected on reconnaissance over the Aegean Sea and in the area of Bar.

In the sea area of Corculla five of our stukas were sent out on operations; they sank two small craft and damaged further craft.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

On 14 Dec. at 1400 the following vessels were reported lying in Gibraltar:

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operations on 15 Dec.

The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff has informed the Naval Staff of the order to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast, Group South and others, that the question of the employment of the steamer PETER for transport of bunker coal is to be settled between Army Group E and Group South direct. The Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command will only take action when all hope of achieving agreement between the offices concerned has been exhausted.

No previous details concerning this matter are known here.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 2000 on 14 Dec. an Army outpost reported one PT boat sailing off the southwest coast of Simi. On 15 Dec. at 0535 a submarine was sighted 15 miles southeast of Lemnos. According to a report from Volos a British submarine has been lying in the Bay of Geramidi for the past two days, carrying out passenger traffic and unloading. An air attack on the submarine and Geramidi is planned for 16 Dec.

Own Situation:

The unprotected passage of small ships to Lemnos and Volos is prohibited until further notice.

In addition to a coal lighter, three auxiliary sailing vessels as a result of the air raid on Piraeus on 14 Dec. The shipping ban in the Bay of Salamis was lifted.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to a Rumanian report two unknown craft shelled the Schlangen Island off the mouth of the Danube between 0430 and 0500 on 12 Dec. The Rumanians returned the fire with ten rounds.

Own Situation:

During the night of 14 Dec. two groups of the 1st PT Boat Flotilla did not sight any enemy objectives in their operational area off Idokopas and Cape Utrisch. Naval landing craft too, operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch did not come into touch with the enemy that night.

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In the course of the submarine hunt in Eupatoria Bay during the night of 14 Dec. by the submarine chaser UJ "101" and "02", the submarine chaser UJ "102" sank with all hands after dropping depth charges. The reason is unknown. An investigation at the scene of the sinking by motor minesweepers and submarine chasers is in progress. The reason has not yet been discovered. The oil-fire which was observed is not attributable to the submarine chaser (war transport ship) which was coal-burning. Hits by torpedoes or mines are improbable. It is possible that an enemy submarine was destroyed by a depth-charge, and that the heavy explosion at short range was fatal to the submarine chaser.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

On the subject of the Russo-Czech treaty Swiss newspapers state that Stalin is enforcing a plan which will ruin the Anglo-Saxon plans for a united Europe and that of the League of Nations. Russia is building up a system of vassal states along her western and southwestern borders. Thus Europe is returning to the former misery and danger of balance-of-power politics.

According to Transocean the Turkish Prime Minister stated before the Turkish press in Cairo that the Allies had raised the question of Turkey entering the war. However, the Turkish Government had been able "to avoid the immediate necessity of entering the war and had temporarily satisfied the Allies by a promise of closer collaboration". He was of the opinion that the situation would thus remain stable for the next 2½ months. However, if Germany made a move in the balkans the Turkish attitude might change.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Chief, Naval Staff is in Weimar for participation in the conference on militarist guidance, in the course of which the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff reported on the situation in the war at sea.

Special Items.

I. Group South submitted a review of the situation by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast, dated 6 Oct. for the end of October. For copy as per 1/Skl 3391/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

II. In the Brief News on the Enemy Situation No. 24/43 Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports among other things on intercepted enemy messages concerning a convoy battle in the North Atlantic. For copy as per 1/Skl 52120/43 geh. see War Diary, Part D, Vol. "Data on the enemy situation".

III. The Radio Monitoring Report No. 50/43 contains a summary of enemy news from de-cyphering and radio Intelligence for the period 6-12 Dec.

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IV. From sketchy captured British material it can be gathered that landing maneuvers by British Forces took place in the area of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aquaba or area of Safaga) from 10 to 14 June 1943. For summary of the information gained from evaluation by the Naval Intelligence Division see reports on the evaluation of information "Foreign Navies" reference Operations Division, Naval Staff 52121/43 geh. see War Diary, Part D.

Situation 16 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

All ships in foreign waters received the following instructions in Telegram 1700:

1. The convoys Halifax - Great Britain (abbreviation HX and Sidney - Canada - Great Britain (abbreviation SC) and the returning convoys (abbreviation ONS or ON) generally follow the Great Circle Route which is left only when danger of submarines make evasion necessary. Therefore the positions of the convoys are estimated according to dead reckoning on position lines. The northern part of these position lines is by far the most used.

2. HX and ON convoys make a day's run of 204 miles, SC and ONS make a day's run of 180 miles. HX and ON convoys proceed at intervals of 6 and 7 days alternately, and SC and ONS at intervals of 13 days.

3. Stragglers are to be reckoned with behind every convoy; they always proceed on alternating courses.

The OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER were informed of the positions of the convoys ON 215, ONS 25, HX 270 and SC 149 in Radiograms 1701 and 1702.

2. Own Situation:

In the same Radiograms 1701 and 1702 the OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER were ordered not to turn hard away and make off when meeting convoys and single-proceeding ships at Point "Jungfernstieg" as elsewhere in the open ocean, but to drop behind unobtrusively and increase the range.

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The OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER furthermore received the following instructions regarding their rendezvous:

1. The ships will be taken under escort by six destroyers and six large modern torpedo boats at Point Zita.

2. Procedure under escort: After meeting with the escort forces the orders of the commander of the convoy are to be obeyed. When coming into touch with the enemy after rendezvous with the escort forces the ship is to be sunk only by order of the commander of the convoy, or, if there are no longer any escort forces near the ship, only when danger of capture by the enemy is imminent.

3. If the escort forces are not contacted, the ships will proceed without delay from Point Zita on course 90 degrees as far as 8 degrees West and then head for 44 degrees 49' North 02 degrees 24' West. Their arrival is to be reported by radiogram or short signal and further instructions awaited if escort forces are still not contacted.

4. After crossing 30 degrees West the OSORNO will receive the convoy name BERNAU and the ALSTERUFER and the cover name TRAVE. From then on the true names and international recognition signals may no longer be used.

All ships in foreign waters were informed of the types of friendly aircraft to be expected off and in the Bay of Biscay in Radiogram 1718.

Submarine Division, Naval Staff has been informed of the positions and sailing instructions for the RIO GRANDS and the BURGENLAND/WESERLAND. For copy 1/Skl 3709/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

Group West submitted the orders for the rendezvous with the OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER. After passing 30 degrees West the ships will receive the names BERNAU and TRAVE.

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla will carry out the rendezvous in 45 degrees 30' North 13 degrees West, and escort the ships to the Grionde. The operational command lies with Group West while the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla will assume tactical command.

The flotillas will leave on 23 Dec. at 1700 for the rendezvous with the BERNAU and will proceed in company to the rendezvous area from BF 83238 lower corner. If the ship is not contacted the flotillas are to return at 1600 and to radio the failure to rendezvous by QQKY after passing 8 degrees West. After re-fuelling the flotillas will leave for the rendezvous with the TRAVE so that the rendezvous point is reached on 28 Dec. at 1000.

As the cargo carried by the blockade-runners is indispensable to the war economy the flotillas have received instructions that the destroyers and torpedo boats must stake everything as long as there is any chance of preventing the loss of the blockade-runners.

For copy of the order see records of Operations Division, I West, Naval Staff.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Twenty five planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay and seven planes of the Azores squadrons.

Six locations of British vessels were made in the rendezvous area.

The two or three merchantmen sighted in the inner Biscay on 15 Dec. were part of one of our convoys, consisting of a minelayer, a patrol boat and a submarine entering the harbor of St. Nazaire.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Torpedo firing exercises by torpedo boats T "25" and T "22" are planned from 16 to 18 Dec. off Concarneau.

The convoy traffic was carried out as planned.

Channel Coast:

No special events to report.

A minelaying operation by the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla is planned for the night of 16 Dec.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The escort and minesweeping service was carried out as planned. The convoy "472" Elbe - Hook is finished.

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altogether four mines were cleared in the area of Terschelling and Vlieland.

In the noon hours several strong enemy bomber formations penetrated into the area of Kiel by way of Holland and the Heligoland Bight. Only Bremen was attacked. With the exception of an enemy plane which crashed in the area of Harlingen no further planes were reported shot down. No Navy officers were damaged. No reports have been received from Bremen.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Thirteen planes were detected operating over the North Sea in the morning and 18 planes in the afternoon.

From 14 Dec. 1744 to 15 Dec. 0916 39 planes penetrated into the Petsamo area and carried out attacks. On 15 Dec. two planes attacked one of our northbound convoys in the Sogne Fjord, while on 16 Dec. four planes attacked a convoy in the area of Stadlandet without result.

On 15 Dec. at 1645 two PT boats were sighted near Rowce, sailing at high speed in a northerly direction.

A further PT boat was sighted between Lister and Lindesnes at 1700. Our anti-PT Boat Patrol was sent out to operate.

Own Situation:

The Norwegian steamer BORGSTEN (1,569 BRT) laden with 2,000 tons of grain sank in the Horton roadstead after collision with a barrage pilot ship. Twenty nine ships each were escorted in the north and south. Twenty five ships remained lying in harbor owing to the lack of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to an Intelligence report the PT boat with a cargo of ball-bearings is expected to leave Lyskil on the night of 17/18 Dec.

2. Own Situation:

The motor minesweeper R "54" sank northwest of Anholt at 1031 as a result of striking a mine. The crew was saved. Commanding Admiral, Defenses, East had not been informed of the departure of the boat.

Otherwise nothing to report from the whole Baltic area.

Naval Command East was ordered by Operations Division, Naval Staff to report on the proposed dockyard periods (with the deadlines for the restoration of operational readiness) of the units destined for operations in the Gulf of Finland in 1944; it was added that a withdrawal of forces from Commander, Minesweepers, East or a new assignment cannot be reckoned with.

V. Submarine Warfare.

On account of the heavy southerly storm the passage south of Group "Colonel 3" was broken off. The Group has been ordered to make for BE 52.

In this area an operation is planned against a northbound convoy to be carried out on 20 Dec. by the remaining boats of Group "Colonel" and those boats leaving the Bay of Biscay.

Otherwise nothing to report.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

No enemy activity was reported from the occupied western territories by day. During the night an anti-aircraft battery in the area of Amiens was subjected to an attack. In addition to this, mines were probably dropped off the west coast in the area of Rochelle.

2. German Reich Territory:

In the afternoon about 300 enemy planes flew over the area of Bremen in two groups, while a diversionary formation of 100 planes entered the area of Kiel via Flensburg, in order to carry out a sham attack on Kiel; about 200 planes were in the area of Papenburg as

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covering formation. With ten/tenths cloud at a height of 100-700 m a heavy terror raid was carried out on Bremen, the attack concentrating on the center of the city and the port area. Major industrial damage was caused in the latter. Two steamers of about 1,000 BRT sank. One hundred of our fighters shot down eleven planes for certain, while the destruction of two further planes is probable; six of our planes are missing.

In the evening hours the enemy carried out an attack on Berlin using about 200 planes according to the estimate of Air Force General Staff. No details have yet been received.

The railway line though the Brenner had to be closed for 72 hours as a result of the attack on the railway installations in the region of Innsbruck. Also the teletype and telephone communications to Italy were considerably damaged.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

In the area of the 2nd Air Force our planes were engaged on reconnaissance. By day the enemy attacked Civitavecchia and Padua. Here the station and the railroad yard were completely destroyed.

A further attack by strong forces was directed against the railway line between Udine and Villach. About 300 enemy planes were operating over the front area.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast the enemy carried out attacks in the region of Zara and Mostar. Sixty spitfires were sent out to operate against traffic on the roads and on machine-gun and bombing attacks in the area of Bar as far as Durazzo. Three Spitfires were shot down. By day 14 fighters were observed in the Aegean; during the night six reconnaissance planes and eight planes supplied partisans.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 15 Dec. a convoy consisting of 30 ships

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was sailing north of Tangier, course west. On 16 Dec. at 0015 one transport, one landing ship and three destroyers left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean.

According to an Intelligence report the Italian cruiser POMPEJO MAGNO was scheduled to leave for the Mediterranean on 15 Dec. with an Italian military commission which has been in Spain until now.

Own Situation:

The guard and escort service off the south coast of France was not carried out because of heavy seas.

2. Area of German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The execution of the minelaying task "Marder" was again postponed because of unfavorable weather conditions. The submarine hunt in the Piombino Straits remained without result. The escort service was carried out as planned.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a.. Adriatic Sea.

Enemy Situation:

Lively air activity in the areas of Zara, Split, Ulcinj, Dubrovnik, Cattaro and Bar on 14 and 15 Dec.

Own Situation:

The transfer of PT boats S "36" and S "55" from Salamis to Cattaro is scheduled to take place on 17 Dec.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air operations against the submarine north of Volos were unsuccessful. The tug VENETIA and an auxiliary

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sailing vessel were sunk between Simi and Rhodes on 13 Dec. at 1740; it was carried out by four PT gun boats which probably left lurking positions in Turkish territorial waters and withdrew in the direction of the Turkish coast after the sinking was carried out. The continued presence of PT boats must therefore be reckoned with.

Radio Intelligence observed lively reconnaissance activity over the southern Aegean.

Own Situation:

The steamer BALKAN passed Istanbul on 15 Dec. when transferring from the Black Sea. The transfer of troops from Piraeus to Samos by the DRACHE, two destroyers, one motor minesweeper and one PT boat is planned for 17 Dec.

The naval radio station at Serifos was put into operation on 13 Dec. and that at Levitha on 15 Dec.

c. Black Sea:

At 0920 the 3rd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla reported submarine warning 12 miles north of Sevastopol. Submarine chasers were sent out.

The submarine hunt in Eupatoria Bay has thus far remained without result.

The shelling of Schlangen Island, as reported on 15 Dec. was not confirmed. On the contrary the garrison of the island fired at unidentified objectives appearing in the fog, probably submarines. Naval landing craft in Kamysh Burun were slightly damaged by fragments on 15 Dec.

The submarine U "9" put into Sevastopol temporarily to refuel.

Two naval landing craft put into Sevastopol with parts of the railway battery of Ak Metchet.

During the night of 15 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch was manned by three naval landing craft. No special events were reported.

On the morning of 16 Dec. an enemy PT boat was sunk by the naval artillery detachment 613 off the bay of Kamysh Burun. In addition, one plane was shot down by this unit.

From 1 -15 Dec. 18,412 tons were brought up for the supply of the Crimea.

On 14 Dec. a harbor defense boat sank northwest of Ak Metchet owing to the heavy seas.

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According to a report from Admiral, Black Sea only two destroyers, one minelayer and one gun boat of the Rumanian naval forces are available for the Sevastopol convoys, as the rest of the units are due for period in dock.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

According to a Russian press report a Czech National Army is being set up in the Soviet Union.

Churchill has fallen ill with pneumonia. He is probably still in Caico.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.I. Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff:

As to be expected, Churchill's illness has caused great consternation in Allied quarters.

In order to check the Portuguese-Japanese conflict over Timor, Ambassador Ritter suggests that our Navy might have some influence with the Japanese Forces.

II. Army Situation:

Strong enemy forces crossed the norther part of the Straits of Kerch. The enemy attack against the Cherson bridgehead broke down at the main line of defense. Our counter-attack in the area of Krovograd was successful. Heavy fighting is still going on on the Berssina river. The main battle is taking place in the area of Nevel. In this area alone 1,700 enemy flights were counted on this day as against 3,000 on the whole eastern front. This is the highest number ever counted so far. Our line had to be withdrawn.

On the whole the enemy large-scale attack against the southern wing of the 1st Army Corps was repulsed.

III. Quartermasrer General, Naval Staff reports that two months of endeavour have failed to secure four Danube tugs for conversion into monitors. The building of new monitors, as requested by the Fuehrer, would take a year at least, and is therefore out of question until the spring. The most practical course is to build new tugs.

Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has also ordered a naval landing craft to carry out tests to see to what extent these units can be employed on the Danube.

The demands for new constructions can be realized only at the expense of the rest of the building program.

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Special Items.

The Hydrographic and Meteorological Division, Naval Staff has discontinued the publication of secret navigational warnings to non-German merchantmen sailing for Germany, as this information is liable to compromise.

Situation 17 Dec.

I. War In Foregin Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

The OSORNO and ALSTERUFER have been informed of the positions according to dead reckoning of the convoys KMS 36, 33 and 34. (See Radiogram 1/Skl I L 3723/43 Gkdos. Chfs. in War Diary, C. I.)

2. Own Situation:

Group West has been instructed to take over the command of the BERNAU and the TRAVE at 2200 on 21 and 25 Dec. respectively by transmitting a radiogram to that effect.

On the basis of recent experiences Submarine Division, Naval Staff assumes that the KM convoys (England -Gibraltar) are hauling off as far as about 23 degrees West, so that the BERNAU will run the risk of a collision from 22 Dec. on. Operations Division, Naval Staff thinks it best that the BERNAU should proceed as planned despite this. Operations Division informed Gropp West and suggested, if the danger of a collision with the convoy arises, to order the BERNAU to evade by proceeding on Jungfernstieg between the 21st and 22nd on northerly course, or to have the ship proceed on Jungfernstieg on reciprocal course for some time, with the proviso that the alternation of course be carried out only by night or when the enemy is definitely out of sight.

For corresponding directives to Group West 1/Skl I k 3716, 3720 Gkdos, Chfs, See War Diary, Part C, I.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Twenty-one planes were detected operating over the North Sea

as far as 13 degrees West. One plane sent out an urgent secret radiogram from BF 1530 between 0510 and 0522.

British vessels were located at 1210 in BE 76 (indistinct), at 1226 in AL 9250 and at 1916 in DH 2260.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Three submarines were escorted out and one in.

Torpedo boats T "22" and T"25" carried out firing exercises off Concarneau.

Channel Coast:

The CONDOR, FLAKE and MOEVE departed at 1745 to execute the minelaying operation L5.

Special Items:

Group West has sent a copy of the instructions dated 30 Nov. for the engagement of naval forces in case of a landing. For copy as per 1/Skl 3594/43 Gkdos. Chofs. see records of Fleet Operations Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff, Naval Staff reserves the right to comment on this matter.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea.

The escort, minesweeping and mine-clearance service was carried out with strong forces. One mine was cleared north of Norderney. Six convoys totalling 36,499 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Zee and in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Eight planes were detected operating over the central and northern North Sea.

On 15 Dec. noise of engines were detected off Petsamo Fjord. On 16 Dec. two well preserved Russian mines M 31 were cut southwest of Kyberg.

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At noon on 16 Dec. one enemy plane was reported over the Bergen area.

Own Situation:

Thirty four ships were escorted north and 30 ships south. Nineteen ships were delayed owing to the lack of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Among the aerial ammunition dropped near Ploen on 13 Dec. were two casings of a new type of U. S. smoke bomb.

At noon the coastal area of Kronstadt Bay was subjected to artillery fire. Air activity between Kronstadt and the northern forts was slight.

According to observations two aerial mines were dropped east of Helsinki in the leads.

2. Own Situation:

In view of the probably departure of a transport PT boat from Lysekil, the Skagerrak patrol was delayed. At 1830 the offices of the naval fitting-out depot at Copenhagen, situated close to the building occupied by the Staff of Admiral Denmark, were raided by ten armed civilians.

In the future Admiral Denmark will combine all the outlying stations of his headquarters.

As a result of the Fuehrer Directive 51 regarding coast defense, the Army has transferred units from schools, replacement training detachments and rear services to the area of Luga Bay in the strength of about 1,600.

The mine protection and escort services were carried out in the whole Baltic area without special event.

V. Submarine Warfare

The Groups "Colonel 1" and "2" were dissolved. Three new

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groups each consisting of six boats have been formed by the inclusion of four outward-bound boats. On 18 Dec. at 2200 Group "Sylt" will occupy the the position line from AK 3417 to 3733. Group "Amerum" the line from 3923 to 6285 and Group "Foehr" from 2219 to 9598. The following patrol lines will be manned on 19 Dec. at 2200: AK 3439 to 3833 by Group "Sylt", AK 6381 to 6955 by Group "Amerum", and BD 3219 to 3699 by Group "Foehr". It is doubtful whether the positions can be reached if there is a heavy westerly storm. During the next few days two westbound and two eastbound convoys are expected in the area of the three groups; there are, however, no clues as to the exact route of the convoys.

Special Items.

I. Submarine Situation as on 1 Sept. 1943:

In service on 1 Nov. 43:	413
Commissioned in November	25
	<u>438</u>

De-commissioned	1
Losses in Nov.; Front:	16
Losses in Nov.; Germany	2
	<u>419</u>

Foreign boats:

Germany:	7
Front:	2
turned over to Japan:	1

2. Distribution of the boats:

Front boats	161 and 2 foreign boats
boats on special training and experimental work	166
boats on training	<u>92 and 2 foreign boats</u>
	419 and 9

3. In November 17 fresh boats were sent to the front. In comparison with the previous months the number of front boats remained unchanged.

4. Of the 161 front boats 129 were in the Atlantic, 14 in the Mediterranean, 12 in Northern Waters and six in the Balck Sea.

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VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

Twenty one planes were ordered into action by the 3rd Air Force. Enemy air activity over the occupied western area was slight.

2. German Reich Territory:

By day single planes approached and crossed the area. No enemy activity was observed by night.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

According to American information altogether 17 Allied ships were sunk in the course of the German air raid on Bari on 2 Dec. This amounted to half of the vessels lying in the harbor. According to a declaration by the Secretary of War, Stimson give of the ships sunk were American vessels; among the 1,000 men lost in this attack 37 were Americans. The 8th Army was in an embarrassing situation for two or three days with regard to supplies as two ships with ammunition had also been destroyed.

No special reports on our operations for the 17 Dec. Two enemy squadrons of fighter-bombers attacked Anzio, south of Rome. Otherwise enemy reconnaissance activity was observed in the Dalmatian area as well as over the Aegean.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

On 17 Dec. at 0930 18 LCT's with the escort vessels coming from the west put into Gibraltar. It is possible that they were withdrawn from North Africa. The Italian cruiser DUCA d'AOSTA left Gibraltar eastbound.

Own Situation:

Submarine alarm was reported off Toulon. Three Red Cross steamers anchored off Sete, a fourth Red Cross steamer put into Port Vendres.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

The two destroyers reported north of Pescara on 15 Dec. shelled Civitavecchia on 15 Dec. at 2245 and sank two motor coasters.

On 16 Dec. there was lively air activity over central Italy, very particularly over the southern harbors, while in northern Italy the enemy attacked lines of communication.

On the morning of the same day a convoy of peniches was fired on by enemy fighters in the Gulf of Genoa. At noon on 16 Dec. an air attack on Benedetto was successfully repulsed by a naval motor transport battalion.

Own Situation:

The workers in the Ansaldo dockyard at Genoa went on a strike.

In the evening two torpedo boats and two motor minesweepers left La Spezia for the execution of the minelaying operation "Marder". Otherwise no special events to report.

3. Area of Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

Lively enemy air activity was observed on the east coast on 15 and 16 Dec. In the course of an attack on Zara by 24 enemy bombers the steamer MARBIANCO (8,446 BRT) was heavily damaged. The steamer ISTO had to be abandoned by her crew because of an unexploded bomb. Apart from this the ship is out of operation because of bomb damage. The naval radio station at Zara is only partially operational.

Sibenik is 60% deserted by the civilian population. Naval food supplies and equipment were destroyed as a result of an enemy air attack on Saseno, west of Valona. Four above ground fuel tanks were destroyed in an attack on the fuel tank depot at Cattaro on 15 Dec.

At noon on 15 Dec. NA "2" was fired on by enemy planes northwest of Dubrovnik; she was damaged, the personnel suffered casualties.

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The Naval Liaison Officer attached to Army Group F sends an excerpt from the daily report of Commanding General, Armed Forces Southeast of 16 Dec. in which it was stated:

"With the naval units still not ready for operations a fresh postponement of operation "Herbstgewitter II" has become necessary. Earliest deadline: 20 Dec."

The Naval Staff sent this information to Group South and Admiral Adriatic with a request to the latter for data for a review of the situation.

The NIOBE and torpedo boats TA "20" and TA "22" are to leave Trieste so that the formation will arrive off the southern tip of Pasman on the evening of 18 Dec.

b. Aegean Sea:

During the night of 16 Dec. 17 enemy planes were observed over the Aegean area supplying partisans.

The steamer BLAKAN fired at an enemy submarine 5 miles east of Cape Irene (Lemnos) when sailing from Istanbul to Chios in the early morning. It is presumed the boat was hit.

PT boats S "36" and S "55" left Salamis in the morning bound for Cattaro. The convoy DRACHE was postponed because of unfavorable conditions.

The Steno Strait in the passage of Chalkis was temporarily closed because of suspicion of mines.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence the destroyer "G" left her base in the northwestern Black Sea making in southeasterly direction.

Own Situation:

In the morning submarine chasers operating in Eupatoria Bay and so far unsuccessful, were ineffectively attacked by enemy planes.

A tug ran aground west of Kinburn Point: after refloating she was damaged by enemy artillery fire. The enemy battery on Kinburn was silenced by our battery. The convoys were postponed because of unfavorable weather conditions. There was no minesweeping activity or PT boat operations.

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Special Items.

Group South expressed a wish for the mine allocation to be raised (see War Diary, 13 Dec.) to 500 UMB's, as on account of the fluctuating situation in the Black Sea long-term preliminary planning of mine-barrages is impossible, and delayed delivery and transport must be taken into consideration.

Operations Division, Naval Staff has complied with this demand by a suitable allocation.

For copy 1/Sk1 41794/43 Gkdos. see records of Mine Warfare Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Allied Headquarters in the southwest Pacific announces that the landing on the south coast of New Britain in the area of Arawe was successful. This is the first American base on the island.

According to an official Japanese announcement Japanese submarine sank 8 ships totalling 66,000 BRT in November, while planes sank 10 ships totalling 45,000 BRT.

Items of Political Importance.

According to a British reports, Churchill's illness gives ni cause for serious alarm.

According to a Reuter report the question of the future relative positions of Marshall and Eisenhower has been cleared up. While Marshall is to remain Chief of Staff in Washington. Eisenhower will probably be appointed Commander in Chief in the European theater of operations. So far it was said that the supreme command would be taken over by General Marshall.

According to a Swedish press report, diplomatic relations between the Swedish and the Czech governments - in - exile in London will be resumed shortly. The Czech Ambassador will be accredited by both the Swedish and Dutch governments - in - exile.

According to a Reuter report Giraud has more than 530,000 French forces under his command, fighting with the Allies. The first part of this army, consisting of 190,000 French and 143,000 native troops, is destined as the expeditionary force to open the fighting on the European continent.

According to Reuter the Turkish Supreme Command has ordered the immediate reinforcement of all defensive measures on the west coast. For the time being the Turks are bent on counterbalancing the strong German access to the Dodecanese and the new extended range of the German Air Force over the Aegean.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Chief, Naval Staff reports that he has placed an additional four submarines from the North Atlantic at the disposal of Commander, Submarines, Norway. If further PQ convoys are detected more submarines will be assigned.

Submarine Division, Naval Staff received a report from Commander, Submarines, Norway according to which a new PQ left Reykjavik on 12 Dec. Nothing is known of it by the Operations Division.

II. On 16 Dec. the Commander in Chief, Navy sent the following personal teletype to the Fuehrer regarding the burning question of long-range reconnaissance for submarine warfare.

I. The superiority of the enemy air force due to the employment of the radar has forced our submarines in the Atlantic more and more below the surface. For the time being it has become necessary to renounce surface operations by day, and for submarines to surface only by night, not only in the approach but also in the main operational areas.

Even if we succeed in reducing the possibility of locating submarines or in opposing enemy radar by our own active radar, there is on the whole little scope for change along this line of development.

Surface tactics by submarines are a thing of the past. In the future operations will be carried out under water. This much feared development has for a long time led to the demand for the Walter submarine, and after the problems of the electrically driven submarine had been solved, for the immediate construction of electrically propelled submarines. According to their basic qualities these new submarines will operate under water, and will also fight mostly underwater. They are far less suitable for surface combat than are the present submarines.

2. The finding of the enemy constituted the main problem even during the best times of submarine warfare, where operations were carried out on the surface only. In the present enforced mode of operation the chances of finding the enemy are, as recent experience has shown, reduced by more than half, since surface operations by day - and therewith the large reconnaissance area of the individual boat - have been discontinued.

3. Even now operations without air reconnaissance hold no promise of success. The past two months have, however, clearly confirmed that the extremely weak forces at the disposal of the Air Commander, Atlantic cannot carry out the minimum reconnaissance requirements necessary for a submarine operation, even when strained to the utmost. Nine out of 14 joint operations already carried out were failures only because the reconnaissance forces were so weak they could not detect the convoy sailing close by the submarine patrol line. The long-term assembly of many submarines will be an uneconomic waste if the necessary number of reconnaissance forces are not also available.

The last operation by Group "Colonel" constitutes an example of this; for this operation in which 25 submarines were engaged, the small number of only three planes was available on each of two days, and after one day's interval only three further machines could be made available. Owing to this weak reconnaissance the convoy was not detached on two days, on the third day it was too late and uncertain for the boats to operate.

4. It must be emphasized that even now successful submarine warfare is greatly dependent on our air reconnaissance, so that the latter becomes an absolute necessity with the employment of the new types of submarines, which will be operating almost exclusively under water. The old demand made by Commanding Admiral, Submarines to have at least 12 machines ready for operations daily, will scarcely suffice for the submarine war with the new types. According to the present planning, and taking into account the new construct-

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ions and losses even until the end of 1944, the total number of long-range reconnaissance planes (Ju 290) which can be reached and maintained by Air Commander, Atlantic will amount to only 20.

5. I therefore beg an investigation as to whether the production of Ju 290's cannot be given priority and I furthermore ask whether the whole production of Ju 290's could not be placed at the disposal of submarine warfare for long-range reconnaissance.

6. I deem it my duty to report that even with the new types of submarine the submarine war can be raised again to a higher level only when the air reconnaissance absolutely indispensable to it is available in sufficient numbers.

This letter was submitted to the Fuehrer by Captain Assmann on the morning of 17 Dec. The same evening the Fuehrer declared that he fully agreed with the views of the Admiral of the Fleet, Doenitz, and that the cited number of Ju 290's to be completed is ridiculously low, and must be increased by every means possible, as submarine warfare is in urgent need of this air reconnaissance.

On the morning of 18 Dec. Captain Assmann informed the Chief of the Air Force, General Staff of the teletype from the Commander in Chief, Navy, and the view taken by the Fuehrer. General Korten subsequently detailed the naval demands to the Reich Marshal. The Reich Marshal stated that a rise in production was impossible as the building capacity of the Air Force was already heavily burdened and interference with the present production was impossible:

General Korten gave Captain Assmann the details on the state of production of Ju 290's and declared his willingness to examine the possibility of increasing production.

III., On the morning of 18 Dec. the Commander in Chief, Navy discussed necessary measures for an advance in the field of radio frequency research with Reich Minister Speer. It was planned to report jointly to the Fuehrer on this matter on 2 Jan in order to effect that the entire scientific capacity available be engaged on the solution of this decisive question of the submarine war, and that it no longer works mainly for only one branch of the Armed Forces, as it has been the case until now, owing to the personal union between the head of the Four-Year Plan and the Air Force Command. The demand thus aims at entrusting Minister Speer with all research work for all branches of the Armed Forces.

IV. Report from Quartermaster General, Naval Staff:

In accordance with orders, the German Naval Command, Italy, should have handed over the entire personnel and naval artillery detachment now employed on the east coast to Admiral Aegean. Actually about 400 men were retained as a nucleus for the battery crews. The execution of the order would paralyze the whole existing organization on the

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Italian east coast. The Chief, Naval Staff decides that about 200 men are to be transferred to Admiral Adriatic by degrees.

V. Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has been ordered to investigate the suggestion that all torpedo boats be given names once more.

In a Highly Restricted Circle:

VI. On the evening of 20 Dec. the submarines in the North Atlantic will withdraw to the north along the convoy which is expected, in order to clear the area which is to be passed by the awaited blockade-runner BERNAU, and draw the enemy off.

VII. Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports on the situation with the regard to the Danube monitors, which the Commander in Chief, Navy intends to discuss with the Fuehrer on 20 Dec. Data will be prepared by 19 Dec. (see Discussion Commander in Chief, Navy -Fuehrer on 19/20 Dec. 1943.

Special Items.

I. Group South informs Operations Division, Naval Staff, Admiral Aegean and Naval Liaison Officer, Air Force Command, Southeast, that on account of the catastrophic convoy situation the execution of the troop movements in the Aegean as ordered will take several months, as the ordered supplying of the islands cannot be carried out in anything like sufficient quantities. The Group Command thus suggests a short-term engagement of all the large transport which the Air Force can provide for the execution of troop transports and solution of the urgent leave problem. For copy of the short letter to this effect as per i/Skl 42407/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

II. Fleet Operations Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports on the conference in Sofia:

The two problems to be discussed are the questions of supply and evacuation. The keyword "Ruderboot" means evacuation by sea with the main withdrawal to Sevastopol.

The keyword "Litzmann" means breakthrough the Perekop Strait in the direction of Cherson. In view of the difficulty of both solutions the Army High Command 17 is of the opinion that there is nothing to be done but to hold the Crimea at all costs. (Keyword "Kolberg").

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The demand for supplies is rising from the present amount of 40,000 tons monthly to 150,000 tons.

Even if all forces are engaged, Group South cannot guarantee execution. The transfer of further shipping from the Aegean is impossible.

Using all food reserves the Crimea can be held until 1 May.

Situation 18 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

The OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER have been informed that commencing 20 Dec. weather observations and forecasts for the Atlantic will be transmitted between 40 degrees and 50 degrees North.

Owing to insufficient data the forecasts are to be supplemented by the local weather observations made by the blockade-runners.

Naval Attache, Tokoyo reports that the BOGOTA left Singapore on 16 Dec. and is heading for Point "Tannenwald".

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty seven planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay. Eight planes of the Azores squadrons were operating. Six locations of British vessels were reported in the reconnaissance area between 0900 and 1900.

On the afternoon of 17 Dec. four British steamers left Tejo.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

After having carried our exercises as planned the torpedo boats T "22" and "25" transferred from Concarneau to Brest.

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One mine was cleared off the Adour mouth.

The minesweeper M "2115" ran aground off St. Nazaire in the fog on 17 Dec. On 18 Dec. at 1215 20 enemy planes attacked the steamer LINZ (PIETRO ORSEOLO) which was anchored in the Concarneau roadstead with torpedoes and bombs during hazy weather. The ship was heavily damaged by hits of both kinds and is in a critical condition. The entire crew including the wounded was saved.

Channel Coast:

The patrol positions were not manned because of bright moonlight and unfavorable weather conditions.

Otherwise nothing to report.

Special Items.

According to a report from Group West even if the mounting of the guns of four 38 cm twin turrets of the Greville battery is increased to a higher priority than SS (most urgent), the first turret will not be ready for combat until 15 Oct., and the second turret not until 15 Dec. 44. In consequence of an order from the Armed Forces High Command according to which the coasts and the immediate rear area must be free of all building which would hamper the fighting by the spring, and in a fully defensive state, Commanding General, Armed Forces West has ordered that the Fuehrer's demand for defensive readiness and camouflage must be carried out by 1 Mar. 44. As defense for the building of the battery at Greville cannot be brought into accord with this order, Naval Group West asks for permission to discontinue the building and to use the manpower and material thus becoming available for the mounting of the medium battery which has been allocated.

For copy of the report see Telegram 1750. The decision of the Chief, Naval Staff will be sent through Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

One mine was cleared northwest of Terschelling.

The westbound convoy "473" Elbe - Hook started at 0900 with six steamers and strong escort.

Otherwise nothing to report.

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2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Ten planes were detected operating over the North Sea.

Own Situation:

On 16 Dec. the battery "Sensenhauer" in the Petsamo entrance was subjected to surprise enemy fire. On 17 Dec. a mine was cleared southwest of Kyberg. Today two planes flew over Vardoe while three planes were reported in the area of Bergen.

On the morning of 18 Dec. one motor minesweeper was vainly attacked by an enemy plane west of North Cape. Owing to defects in the lines of communication there are no reports from the area of Admiral, Polar Coast. In the remaining areas 29 ships were escorted north and 29 south. Owing to lack of escort vessels two ships remained in harbor.

On 17 Dec. at 2332 the submarine U "636" reported a singly proceeding ship in AC 4465 on course 70 degrees according to hydrophone bearings. The submarines were assigned new attack areas from AC 1988 to 4658. On 18 Dec. the submarine U "636" reported "no further hydrophone bearings, presence of enemy submarines presumed."

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

Among the escorted vessels was the cruiser LEIPZIG, the destroyers BEITZEN And the target ship HESSEN.

V. Submarine Warfare.

One submarine of Group "Foehr" reported a plane in AK 9244 at 1230. The Group was ordered to proceed under water by day on 19 Dec. as owing to heavy sea anti-aircraft defense is impossible. A belated arrival in the assigned patrol line must be reckoned with.

Boats of Group "Colonel 3" along with five boats coming from France will patrol the line from BE 4691 to 5652 on 20 Dec. at 1000 for the operation against the northbound MKS convoy. On 19 Dec. our air reconnaissance will be carried out by five FW 200's. However, in view of the weather conditions

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it is doubtful whether they will be able to take off.

The boats U "314", "716" and "957" en route to the Atlantic are subordinate to Commander, Submarines, Norway until further notice. The transfer of two further boats from Germany has been ordered.

There are no special reports from the remaining areas of operations.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

During an attack on one of our supply and minesweeping convoys in the Concarneau roadstead, in the course of which the steamer LINZ was damaged, our fighter defense operated without success.

Enemy formations entering the areas of San Remo, San Raphael and Nice at noon destroyed or damaged the roads and railroads of Var in the vicinity of Nice. A fresh attack on the viaduct near Antheor was unsuccessful.

During the night of 18 Dec. five Ju 188's were detailed to carry out a nuisance raid on London. One plane reached the target, a second one attacked Brighton. Three planes failed to return to their bases.

2. Reich Territory:

By day single planes flew over northern and western Germany. Single planes coming from the south penetrated into the area east of Warsaw evidently in order to land agents.

As regards the attack on Berlin during the night of 16 Dec. it is reported retrospectively that it was a medium-heavy attack from a height of 5-6,000 m by about 200 planes. Isolated bombs were dropped on Dessau, Bitterfeld, Magdeburg and some small localities in Mark Brandenburg. Under limited operating conditions night fighters shot down 19 planes for certain, and one further probable. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down three more planes. Three of our planes are missing. For damage and casualties caused in Berlin see Daily Situation.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

About 220 enemy planes were operating in the front area; six of these were shot down.

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Six enemy reconnaissance planes were observed over the Aegean. There is no report on our own operations.

4. Eastern Front:

Enemy planes approached the area of Bergen and Lister; one of these planes was shot down near Haugesund and one FW 38 was shot down. Otherwise nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

During the night of 17 Dec. a large convoy consisting of 87 ships, including large transports escorted by destroyers, and coming from the Mediterranean passed Gibraltar, course west. Twelve vessels put into Gibraltar. The convoy is probably the GUS "24". During the same night a large unit escorted by two destroyers was observed north of Tangier, course west. Shipping in Gibraltar is unchanged.

Own Situation:

A convoy of 2,700 BRT was escorted off the south coast of France.

2. Area of German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

At noon on 17 Dec. two freight peniches were torpedoed by a submarine south of Savona. On 18 Dec. at 1120 a submarine sank the steamer LA FORCE east of Genoa.

Own Situation:

A submarine hunt was started in the Gulf of Genoa. The torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" carried out the minelaying operation "Marder" off Corsica, and subsequently shelled Bastia. There was no resistance from land or sea. The presence of radar station in the northeastern corner of Corsica was confirmed.

The minelayer DWARSLAEUFER and the three motor minesweepers transferred from Spezia to Elba to commence the minelaying operation.

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In the course of an enemy air attack on Fano on the evening of 16 Dec. one motor coaster was sunk and two motor coasters were damaged. Further attacks on 16 and 17 Dec. on one of our convoys near Civitavecchia and on Benedetto did not cause any damage.

The strike in Genoa has extended to 30,000 dockyard workers and longshoremen.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

The NIOBE and the torpedo boats TA "21" and "22" are on passage southwards. The torpedo boat TA "20" was retained in Trieste owing to a leak in the forward part of the ship.

PT boats S "36" and "55" put into Cattaro on 18 Dec.

From an intercepted radiogram sent by Admiral Adriatic from Mostar it is gathered that our operation against Corcula will commence early on the morning of 20 Dec. The NIOBE and three torpedo boats are operating north and south of this island. The PT boats are scheduled to leave Cattaro on 19 Dec. after twilight for an offensive torpedo operation against the shipping between Brindisi and Gargano, and are to be in the area off the island of Vis by dawn on 20 Dec.; there they are to carry out a short surprise shelling attack and afterwards they will attack craft west and south of Corcula.

After re-fuelling the boats are to leave again on the evening of 21 Dec. for pursuit operations at night against crafts of all kinds, and to carry out a short surprise attack on the harbor of Lastovo at dawn on 21 Dec. (see Radiogram 1949).

Group South transmitted the following reply from Commanding Admiral, Adriatic in answer to the inquiry made by Naval Staff on 12 Dec.:

1. The statements made by the Army are essentially correct and are rooted in material insufficiency.

2. The 118th Light Infantry Division refused to carry out the operation without sufficient transport for the crossing. Beyond that the Commander of the division demanded a further 24 hours after the necessary shipping had been assembled for final preparations.

3. On 16 Dec. only the Siebel ferry SF "264" was available for the crossing to Corcula. The urgent delivery of the Siebel ferries SF "193" and SF "267" was ordered in good time from the very beginning. They were delayed however, as Siebel ferry SF "193" had a leakage in the cooling system

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the cooling system and Siebel ferry SF "267" had engine trouble; Siebel ferry SF "268" was still out of action in Trieste. At present Siebel ferry SF "192" is in Dubrovnik, it will be ready for operations only after the clearance of the Peljesac Canal.

4. At present Siebel ferry SF "193" is on the way to its destination. Siebel ferry SF "267" is lying in Zadar with damage to the driving gear. It will probably be operational again on the evening of 17 Dec.

5. The size and nature of the operation permits execution only when at least two Siebel ferries are available at the jumping-off harbors on the northeast coast of Peljesac. The amount of suitable small craft available in addition is not sufficient. A sustained attempt has been made to bring up further craft for "Herbstgewitter" 2, but this could not be achieved until now on account of the shipping situation in the Adriatic.

6. Thus X-day had to be shifted to 20 Dec. as was reported, after agreement was reached with the Army.

Group South furthermore reports that the concentration of naval forces for "Herbstgewitter" has started, and that the NIOBE and the torpedo boats will be in the bay off the southern tip of Pasman on the evening of 18 Dec. According to a report from Admiral, Adriatic the fighter protection provided for the operation is completely inadequate. Group South has taken the necessary steps with the Air Force Command, Southeast.

b. Aegean:

Owing to unfavorable weather conditions two of our convoys were postponed by 24 hours.

The naval signal station (F.U.) at Monemvasia, north of Cerigo, started working on 16 Dec. and the naval teleprinter station at Zante on 18 Dec.

c. Black Sea:

The submarine chaser UJ "316" ran aground in the mouth of the Danube. A tug, damaged off Otchakov, was towed in.

The transfer of the dock from Nikolajev to Odessa is planned to take place on 19 Dec.

Unfavorable weather conditions prevented PT boat operations.

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During the night of 18 Dec. the patrol positions in the southern Straits of Kerch will be manned by three naval landing craft.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Reuter reports that though Churchill is still seriously ill, he is progressing satisfactorily, and the crisis of the illness, which had slightly affected the heart, is passed.

The Polish government in exile does not seem inclined to join in the Russo-Czech pact. It is, however, presumed that the Polish government will suggest that Poland joins in the Anglo-Russian treaty!"

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

After reports from the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff and Quartermaster General, Naval Staff, the Chief, Naval Staff has decided that the following craft are to be prepared as emergency monitors for the Danube:

a. four naval artillery lighters originally intended for Lake Peipus, and

b. two of the tugs which were intended for Naval Group South.

Quartermaster General, Naval Staff was asked by the Operations Division, Naval Staff to take the necessary action and to report the estimated date of completion as soon as possible,

Special Items.

The Chief, Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division transmitted a report regarding the organization of the Italian Armed Forces and the employment of Italian auxiliary volunteers by German units to Operations Division, Naval Staff for information.

For copy as per 1/Skl I a 42334/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV:

Situation 19 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

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II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Twenty four planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay, and nine planes of the Azores squadrons. British vessels were located at 0921 in AM 3610 and BE 8761, at 1156 in BE 6110 and at 1225 in BE 2680.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Three submarines were escorted out and two in.

One mine was cleared off La Pallice and one northwest of the Adour mouth. Minesweeper M "475" was driven on to the Concarneau jetty during a heavy storm.

With regard to the steamer LINZ, it is being investigated whether partial unloading in the Concarneau roadstead is possible, as considering the state of the ship and the present weather conditions a transfer to Brest seems to be impossible.

Channel Coast:

Owing to the storm the patrol positions were not manned. The radar gear at Cape de la Hague was blown down. The damage cannot be estimated yet.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters:

I. North Sea:

The patrol positions were not manned on account of the storm. The patrol and escort service was carried out on a limited scale.

The convoy "1197" Hook- Elbe was completed as planned. The convoy "473" Elbe -Hook put into Borkum because of the weather conditions. Three mines were cleared in the Borkum area, one in the area of Juist, and three in the area of Terschelling and Vlieland.

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2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Over the North Sea 14 planes were detected operating in the morning and three in the afternoon. Radio traffic repeatedly mentioned landing craft in the Firth of Forth and Humber district.

On 18 Dec. at 1013 a Boston vainly attacked our eastbound convoy in the Brei Sound. On 19 Dec. the attack was repeated against the westbound convoy in the area of Tanhorn. On 18 Dec. at 1135 six planes were reported in the area of Vardoe and at noon two planes in the area of Petsamo. At 2235 the same day an unidentified vessel at high speed, probably a PT boat, was sighted west of the Isle of Kinn.

On 19 Dec. at 1100 a submarine vainly attacked the singly proceeding Norwegian steamer ROALT JARL with four depth charges north of Stadlandet.

According to a report from a reliable Intelligence Division agent, fisherman observed a formation consisting of two fairly large warships west of Bremangeroe at dawn on 18 Dec.: behind this formation there were four or five minelayers in groups, and behind these five - eight craft of an unknown type. The whole formation was sailing on a northerly course and at a speed of 12-15 knots. According to the Naval Command, Norway the reliability of this report cannot be accepted without further investigation. Two of our planes which crossed the area in the morning hours did not sight any enemy objectives; certainly the visibility was bad.

On 18 Dec. Submarine U "636" reported two escort vessels with seatch gear about 100 miles southeast of Bear Island; the same day submarine U "354" reported locations 140 miles east-southeast of Bear Island, as well as gunfire and pursuit with depth charges by search group.

According to radio intelligence two ships of a PQ convoy were ordered to put into Russian harbors at 2011 on 17 Dec.

According to a report from the Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command nine ships and two tankers left Reykjavik on the afternoon of 12 Dec.

Commander, Submarines, Norway radioed this report to the submarines in the northern area on the afternoon of 12 Dec., stating that the ships numbered 29. The Naval Staff invited Commander, Norway to report on what data this report was based. At the same time the Chief of the Naval Communications Division was ordered to make further investigations.

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Own Situation:

At 0630 the steamers GISELA and OLGA SIEMERS collided in the barrage gap at Stavanger. The former was heavily damaged.

Since 1417 heavy continuous explosions took place in the ammunition transit camp of the Naval Artillery Ordnance Command and Armed Forces Transshipment Staff in Oslo. The extent of the damage and the cause is not yet known.

Forty three ships were escorted north and 24 south. Sixteen ships remained lying in harbor owing to lack of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

At 0545 the mine-exploding vessel "190" on construction in the dockyard of Svendborg was sabotaged with high explosives. The new ship, which was still without engines, has sunk.

2. Own Situation:

One ELM/J was cleared south of Bornholm.

Owing to unfavorable weather conditions no convoys were carried through in the area of Commander, Minesweepers, East and in the Baltic sea entrances.

Otherwise nothing to report.

Admiral, Baltic Countries has requested that the newly formed Lake Peipus flotilla be subordinate to him both administratively and operationally. Army Group North is however, of the opinion that with the withdrawal of the front to the Panther position which includes Lake Peipus, the flotilla should be operationally subordinate to the 18th Army or the headquarters which is in charge of operations on the lake front. Naval Command, Baltic Sea supported the view held by Army Group, North and asked for a final decision.

Operations Division, Naval Staff considers that the Flotilla should be subordinate to Admiral, Baltic Countries both administratively and operationally, with the proviso that it comply with the requirements and instructions of the 18th Army or the Army unit in charge of operations on the lake front. Operational subordination to an Army unit is not considered desirable.

Further action will be taken by the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Submarine U "515" sank the steamer KINGSWOOD (5,080 BRT) in BV 6711 and on 20 Dec. the steamer PHEMIUS (7,400 BRT) in BV 8134 on the way from Lagos to Takoradi.

There are no special reports from the north Atlantic.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

During the night of 19 Dec. single enemy planes flew over Belgium, northern and western France. Some bombs fell on an airfield in the area of Amiens. Seven Me 410's and 13 fighter-bombers took off for a harassing raid on London. No reports have yet been received.

2. Reich Territory:

In the noon hours 150 enemy planes from the area of Foggia crossed the Adriatic in a northerly direction for an attack on Innsbruck in two waves. The attack was concentrated on the railway installations. For the time being all entrances and exits to Innsbruck are closed. Until now 194 of our fighters and heavy fighters which took off in defense reported that six enemy planes were shot down for certain. A considerable increase in this number is expected. During the approach of the enemy formation two planes were destroyed by anti-aircraft artillery, a third plane crashed.

In the course of the attack on Berlin on 16 Dec. the offices of the Hydrographic and Meteorological Division, Naval Staff were damaged again. The meteorological service was seriously interrupted for a short time. The emergency office at Tannenberg was put out of order by bomb damage.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Forces of the 2nd Air Force carried out reconnaissance.

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About 200 enemy planes were operating over the front area. Four of these planes were shot down by our anti-aircraft artillery. Strong forces attacked the railway station at Ponte San Giovanni, as well as factories at Termini, the airfield of Rieti near Rome, Civitavecchia and Foligno. Heavy hits were scored on the station and the aircraft works at the latter.

Major enemy air formations were reported in the region of Split in the area of Air Force Command Southeast. During the night there was lively enemy air activity taking supplies to the partisans in the Balkans and on Crete. Four to five planes were observed on reconnaissance in the Aegean.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

The KING GEORGE Vth class vessel left Gibraltar in unknown direction. At noon a convoy consisting of 12 freighters and one transport left for the Atlantic.

Own Situation:

Two convoys totalling 5,500 BRT were escorted off the south coast of France.

At 1230 three motor minesweepers south-southeast of Drammont were attacked in vain by an enemy plane. At 1700 the harbor defense boat FLA "12" ran aground in the area of Toulon. Salvage operations are in progress.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

At 0622 a submarine fired three misses at a task force of naval landing craft north of Elba. The submarine which sank the steamer LA FORCE in the vicinity of Sestri Levante on 18 Dec. was sunk by the submarine chaser UJ "2208".

Own Situation:

The torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" carried out the minelaying operation "Biber", and the minelayer DWARSLAEUFER the operation "Lachs" as planned. The torpedo boats were twice attacked by PT boats with torpedoes without results. The shelling of Bastia could not be carried out owing to unfavorable weather conditions. The strike in Genoa continues. The dismantling of the motor minesweepers and PT boats for the transfer by land to the Adriatic is therefore delayed.

3. Area of Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

On 18 Dec. at 2200 a Siebel ferry sailing to Trogir was sunk by gunfire from a fairly large enemy vessel.

Group South reports that the beginning of the operation "Herbstgewitter" was postponed because of the lack of fighter protection, and that the units remain ready for the operation.

During the night of 19 Dec. two PT boats will be operating from Cattaro against enemy craft in the area of the islands of Curzola, Hvar, Brac and Solta.

The tanker DONNA BELLA (250 BRT) ran aground southwest of Trieste.

The following report from Group South gives a good illustration of the unsatisfactory situation in the Adriatic:

"1. Torpedo boat TA "20" is out of commission for an unknown length of time because of a leak in the forward part of the ship. Of seven Siebel ferries available, one ferry is out of commission in Trieste, one ferry aground, one ferry has damage to driving gear, one ferry cannot get from Dubrovnik to North because of enemy superiority over the the canals, one was set on fire and sunk along with an infantry landing craft by a fairly large enemy vessel during the night of 18 Dec., 1 ferry is ready for operations.

2. An auxiliary sailing vessel carrying 800 life jackets for "Herbstgewitter" and 80 cbm of gasoline for Siebel ferries was sunk by eight enemy fighters on 16 Dec. Meanwhile the replacement of the fuel has been arranged. The bringing up of 400 life jackets is being attempted by a Siebel ferry in spite of damage to driving gear.

3. The attacks of the last few days emphasize the absolute air superiority of the enemy. After heavy losses only two fighters are now available. According to an Air Force report the bringing up of

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14 fighters which have been made available is impossible for the time being, because of unfavorable weather conditions.

After the experiences of the last few days, operations by less than eight fighters at a time are refused. Thus there will be no fighter protection on 20 Dec. if the unfavorable weather conditions continue. Under these circumstances the 5th SS Mountain Army Headquarters refuses to execute operation "Herbstgewitter". In view of the complete enemy air superiority the Navy cannot undertake the responsibility of operating the NIOBE and torpedo boats without fighter protection.

4. The 2nd Panzer Army Command has been informed by the 5th SS Mountain Army Headquarters. The decision on the probable postponement of X-day for operation "Herbstgewitter" will be taken at midday according to weather conditions."

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted three vessels, probably PT boats, northeast of Castellrosso on 18 Dec. The naval signal station on Rhodes sighted two PT boats northwest of the northern tip of Rhodes on 19 Dec. at 1020, course east. At 1240 four planes attacked the harbor of Simi with bombs and machine guns.

Own Situation:

The departure of the convoy DRACHE was postponed until 20 Dec. A foreign type mine was swept in Selamis Bay.

The Naval Staff took up the request from Group South regarding the use of transport planes in the Aegean and forwarded it to the Operations Staff (Navy), Armed Forces High Command. For copy as per 1/Skl 42407/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 17 Dec. planes attacked Cherson with high explosives and incendiaries. No damage was caused to naval installations. On 19 Dec. at 0900 six planes carried out an attack with aerial torpedoes on a towed convoy which was putting into Ak Metchet.

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Own Situation:

The submarine chaser UJ "316" which ran aground in the mouth of the Danube has refloated. The transfer of the dock from Nikolajev to Odessa has begun and has proceeded as planned until now.

Naval landing craft operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch did not sight any enemy objectives during the night of 18 Dec. Unfavorable weather conditions rendered PT boat operations impossible.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

High authorities in Washington denied rumors according to which Russia was assured that no objections would be raised to her territorial claims in the Baltic states, Poland and Rumania, in return for which Russia is said to have renounced any claims on the Dardanelles.

According to a report from the Japanese Military Attache in Moscow the British and American Attaches there expressed their fears that Russian losses during the summer and autumn have been far greater than estimated, and probably amounted to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ million men: in addition to this 5,000 tanks were lost. Thus a new operative reserve could hardly exist. Even the production capacity of the armament industry was decreasing, while the food situation was getting worse.

The Naval Tokyo reports a statement made by Chief of the Japanese Naval Staff, according to which he considers the threat of an agreement with Germany to be Russia's most effective means of pressure to enforce the establishment of a second front. As long, however, as Russia continues to exercise her pressure spontaneously and in undiminished degree there is no reason for the Americans and British to worry about Russian desires, and this the less so as both Allies are very interested in the further weakening of Russia. It is significant that with the shifting of Anglo-American interest to the Pacific, be it even temporarily, the campaign in Italy practically came to a standstill after the liberation of the Suez route. The Chief of the Naval Staff is also of the opinion that the handing over of bases in East Siberia as was probably demanded by Roosevelt was certainly refused by Stalin, since this would mean playing his trump cards. Stalin too, is very interested in the weakening of the Americans and British.

The Chief of the Naval Staff further pointed out that the main weapon of this war is the torpedo, not as carried by the submarine on which the Japanese Navy had built great hopes, but by the airplane. The ratio of the successes achieved by the submarine and the plane is about 1:30. The successes achieved by the use of torpedoes have steadily increased. Fifteen air torpedoes were necessary to sink the PRINCE OF WALES, today two or three torpedoes would suffice. The Japanese tactics consist of maintaining contact with the enemy by day, and attacking during the hours after sunset. The dropping of small aluminium plates and rocket lights reduced the Japanese losses to a minimum. The Chief of the Naval Staff considers that a similar proceeding in the waters around Great Britain and in the Mediterranean would result in considerable successes. In view of the German-Japanese dependence on each other he finally requests an exchange of ideas between leading personalities, the demand for which has become very urgent.

The Chief, Naval Staff is at Fuehrer Headquarters.

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Special Items.

I. All operations carried out during the past weeks in co-operation with the Air Commander, Atlantic and Commanding Admiral, Submarines against the north-south and west-east convoys in the North Atlantic were frustrated. According to the view of the Naval Staff the failure is not attributable to any deficiency in the crews of the Air Commander, Atlantic but was due to lack of forces. It is impossible to carry out adequate reconnaissance of the large sea areas in question several days in succession with only one, or in maximum case, with three planes, even when equipped with ship's gear. The convoys were, if at all, detected only by chance, and then so late that a change of the submarine dispositions was no longer possible. Thus each of these operations is fresh proof that only with adequate air reconnaissance will submarine warfare be able to achieve new successes. The Air Force Operations Staff and the Reich Marshal were informed of this necessity by the Chief, Naval Staff and Naval Staff in numerous letters and personal discussions. A demand was made for 12 operational planes to be placed at the disposal of submarine warfare daily. This demand was acknowledged as practicable and possible to carry out within a short time. Field Marshal Milch promised that the projected monthly production of 26 planes would be raised to 50 planes monthly if possible.

Against this, a production target sent in by the General, Air Reconnaissance provides for 10 Ju 290's as the monthly maximum for 1944, and 10 Ju 290 reconnaissance planes for 1945. Thus the number of planes available to the squadron can be raised to 20 at most only after eight months, and only then by reckoning with a minimum of losses.

At the same time the General, Air Reconnaissance reported that this Ju 290 will also be built as a bomber, its construction will start in January 1944 so that already in December 1944 ten bombers will be completed monthly, and in December 1945, 30 bombers monthly. This means that of this type, which is of decisive importance to the submarine war, only one third will be placed at the disposal of long-range reconnaissance in the Atlantic.

The Naval Staff thus urgently requests:

a. That production be raised to at least 25 planes per month as soon as possible.

b. That the building capacity used for it be used exclusively for the reconnaissance type, while the bomber production of this type be discontinued until a daily minimum of 12 operational Ju 290 reconnaissance planes is guaranteed.

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The Chief, Naval Staff will discuss this matter with the Fuehrer.

II. On 16 Dec. Group South submitted demands for personnel and equipment in connection with the occupation of the islands in the Dalmatian area in the interests of protecting the vital sea traffic.

Operations Division, Naval Staff passed on these demands to the Operations Staff, Navy, Armed Forces High Command, Army General Staff, Naval Liaison Officer, Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Operations Staff, Navy, and Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command for further action. The report from Naval Group South is the result of a joint investigation carried out by Naval Staff with Group South and Admiral, Adriatic. Naval Staff considers the occupation of the islands as proposed in the report indispensable. The Naval Staff is of the opinion that this is a military task which the Navy is unable to take over because of the lack of suitable personnel.

For copy of the letter 1/Skl 42406/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

III. Operations Division, Naval Staff answered the telephone inquiry from Group South regarding the new organization of the government administration and Armed Forces of the Italian Republic by teletype 1/Skl I ca 42514/43 Gkdos.

For copy see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

IV. Group South requested that the Italian CB submarines be distributed in the Black Sea, Adriatic and Aegean. Operations Division, Naval Staff intends to comply with the request of the Group. Submarine Branch, Quartermaster Division has therefore been ordered to investigate together with Group South whether the bases necessary for the submarines can be established in the Adriatic and Aegean. The bays of Cattaro and Valona (in addition to Trieste, Pola, and Fiume) are suggested in the Adriatic, and Salamis and Salonica in the Aegean. The Adriatic is to be given preference over the Aegean.

For copy 1/Skl op. 42580 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.

V. The Commanding Admiral, Submarines has requested five ju 88's with two crews, three Me 110's with three crews, one Me 109 E with one crew and one BV 138 with one crew to be placed permanently at his disposal for the training of the 20th Submarine Flotilla.

Thus far the discussions between the Air Force Training Staff, the Air Force Operations Staff and the replacement training groups in the Blatic

did not lead to a satisfactory result, as on the one hand the Air Force Stated that it was quite impossible to comply with this demand by drawing upon the front area and on the other hand the Naval Air Units in the Baltic were fully engaged on anti-aircraft firing exercises for coastal work, fleet and submarines. The temporary presence of a replacement training group of ground attack airplanes in the Baltic made submarine training possible. As these groups are to be withdrawn in January 1944 Operations Division tried to get the Air Force Operations Staff to transfer Italian fighters and multiple-engine bombers exclusively for purposes of submarine training. This proposal was, however, rejected, since Italian Air Force formations are to be reformed for the Italian area. Operations Division again ordered a joint discussion between the Chief of the Air Force, Training Staff, the Chief of the 20th Submarine Flotilla, the Chief of the Air Service Units and the Chief of the Air Force Training Unit in order to settle this matter. The Commanding Admiral, Submarine considers, however, that these discussions are taking too much time and suggested a special discussion between the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff and the Chief of the Air Force, General Staff.

Operations Division considers that this question can be solved satisfactorily if the planes needed are stationed in the Danzig area in the form of a small Air Service Group for submarine training. Operations Division furthermore desires that this matter be settled in the course of the conference which has been ordered. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reserves the right to approach the Chief of the Air Force, General Staff if no direct agreement is reached. He got the impression that Air Force circles have no exact idea of the kind, duration, extent, etc. of the necessary exercises. The conference which has been called is aimed at making them acquainted with these things.

VI. The Commander, PT Boats submitted a fundamental survey on the defensive engagement of the PT boat weapon in the western area to Operations Division, Naval Staff and Group North/Fleet on 6 Nov. Group North/Fleet and Group West appended their comments.

These reports are in the records of Fleet, Operations Section, Operations Division; Naval Staff. Operations Division, Naval Staff decided as follows:

"I. The statement of Naval Group West, according to which offensive operations by PT boats were actually not directly affected by defensive tasks in the autumn of 1943 is recognized. Otherwise the "Order for the Engagement of Fleet Units during the Winter of 1943-44", is referred to, as it contains the necessary instructions for the engagement of PT boats.

In addition to defense against enemy attempts at landing, which in the western area will fall mainly upon PT boats in addition to the patrol forces, the main task of the PT boats

remains the attack on convoy traffic off the British coast with torpedoes and mines. Thus the employment of PT boats for the purpose of patrol service and escort tasks will remain restricted to a minimum in accordance with the view of Naval Group West and Commander PT Boats.

2. The basic plans of the Commander, PT Boats on the tactics of defensive engagement are approved.

3. The unity of command in our coastal zone by the patrol and escort forces must be maintained even in the event of PT boat operations. On the other hand it is necessary - very particularly from a communication point of view - that the PT boats come under the same command and the same method of command as during offensive operations off the enemy coast as well as in our coastal waters; for only in that way can a maximum performance from the PT boats be gained.

Both demands must be taken into account during PT boat operations in our own coastal waters.

Basically PT boats are always commanded by the Commander, PT Boats. During PT boat operations in our coastal zone the Defense Division have the right to issue orders to the PT boats operating, and as far as the situation requires; they are also entitled to give orders to the Commander, PT Boats. This ruling is also applicable during PT boat operations against enemy landings, unless the Group reserves the right to issue orders to the Commander, PT Boats according to the "Order for the Engagement of Fleet Units" Part II, Paragraph 3).

The first condition for the smooth working of the command in accordance with these regulations is the closest direct contact between the Defense Divisions and the Commander, PT Boats and the Group and Commander PT Boats respectively. It is therefore essential that the positions of the command post, of the emergency commands and the communications between these commands, when they are not in the same place, are checked. The result of this examination is to be reported, and any necessary measures to be taken as quickly as possible.

4. As regards the request of Naval Group, West for the continued construction of escort motor minesweepers it is remarked that the building of this type will be discontinued after the completion of the 12th boat, approximately at that time when the present motor minesweeper will be replaced by the new motor minesweeper, which is about 30% bigger, With two engines of greater capacity the boat reaches about the same speed and has the same armament as the escort motor minesweepers.

VII. On 18 Dec. QM Div., Naval Staff sent demands regarding the production of minesweepers in 1944 and 1945 to the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Construction Division and to the Center Committee on Ship Construction. For copy as per 1/Skl 42524/43 most secret see War Diary,

Part B, Vol. V.

VIII. On 20 Dec. Chief of Naval Communications Division reported the manpower required for the technical communications service, stating that it will be necessary to do without the personnel for about 40 radar posts, in order to employ the men becoming hereby available for the requirements of the Communications and Equipment Branch, Bureau of Naval Armament, that is for the installation and maintenance of the technical Communications Service with 10 qualified engineers, 30 engineers and 530 specialists.

For copy of the report to this effect to the Navy and the Bureau of Naval Administration as per 1/Skl 52710 gch. see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

IX. On 21 Dec. the Chief, Armed Forces High Command issued instructions for the Commander of the Fortress of Crete. According to it all troops and offices of the German Armed Forces ordered into operation by the Commander are subordinate to the Commander of the fortress in both territorial and tactical respects. There will be no change in administrative subordination. Excluded from this ruling are the naval forces and the Air Force ground forces. The latter are subordinate to him only in territorial respects. For copy of the order as per 1/Skl 52753/43 secret see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

X. Naval Intelligence Division reports on the installations and the development work in the harbors of the Atlantic coast of Morocco in the information bulletin "Evaluation of Information concerning Foreign Navies".

In the same bulletin on the basis of captured British material, the Naval Intelligence Division reports on the execution of reconnaissance training for the preparation of large-scale landing operations which were carried out in September 1943, with Beirut as the jumping-off harbor and Cyprus the port of operations. For copies as per 1/Skl 52731, 52732/43 see War Diary, Part D "Evaluation of Information on Foreign Navies".

Situation 20 Dec.I. War in Foreign Waters.I. Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence revealed that the convoy KMS "35"/OS "61" was in the sea area between 38 degrees and 40 degrees North on 15 Dec.; thus it is presumed to have passed the North Channel on 8 Dec. Accordingly the convoys KMS "36"/OS "62" will not be in the North Channel on 16 and 17 Dec. respectively but probably on 18 Dec. At 2300 on 17 Dec. a convoy, GUS "24", consisting of altogether 87 ships passed Ceuta on course west. It should

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pass the sea area BF 6579 on 20 Dec. on the passage to Great Britain with a speed of $7\frac{1}{2}$ knots.

2. Own Situation:

On the basis of this enemy information Group West asked the Air Commander Atlantic to carry out reconnaissance for the BERNAU on 21 Dec. from the area between AL 88 and BE 12 as far as BE 65 and BE 67, if necessary by weakening the reconnaissance over the southern part of the area scheduled for 21 Dec.

Group West considers that the information provided by radio intelligence regarding the delay of KMS "36" is not so convincing as to make it necessary to hold up the passage of the BERNAU. The Group feels that if the BERNAU were delayed it would reduce the distance between it and the TRAVE to an undesired extent, so that the rendezvous of the TRAVE with the destroyers or torpedo boats would no longer be guaranteed.

This view is also held by Operations Division, Naval Staff. The weather report from 0500 to 1900 was transmitted to the OSORNO and ALSTERUFER by the Naval Staff. According to it west winds, velocity 3-4, with strongly increasing cloud, visibility 5-10 miles, are to be expected in the south part of the rendezvous area on 21 Dec., and west winds velocity 4-6, changing cloud and mainly good visibility in the north part.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Sixteen planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay as far as 45 degrees North. Six planes of the 15th Group were over the north reconnaissance area. One British vessel was located at 1343 in AM 7610, one at 1345 in AM 7771, and one at 1157 in AL 66.

In the evening a northbound convoy was detected in BE 5511.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Owing to stormy weather there was no minesweeping activity. Two convoys totalling 6,800 BRT were carried out. Two submarines were escorted out, and one of them in again.

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Destroyers Z "32" and ZH "I" transferred from Bordeaux to Le Verdon roadstead.

The steamer LINZ (PIETRO ORSEOLO) was towed away at 2215 and was beached on a sandbank west of Loreint for the time being.

Channel Coast:

Owing to stormy weather the patrol positions were not manned; there was no minesweeping activity.

In the course of an enemy air raid on Lumbres some bombs were dropped on the naval food supply depot.

The transfer of steamer IDA from Brest to Cherbourg escorted by the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla is scheduled to take place during the night of 20/21 Dec. as well as minelaying operations by the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla. No reports have yet been received.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

Strong U. S. bomber formations crossing the Dutch area at 1300 were fired on by the naval anti-aircraft artillery in the whole Dutch and German coast area.

The exact number of the enemy planes shot down is not yet known.

Owing to stormy weather the patrol positions were only partially manned.

In Zeeland Waters two convoys were carried out on 19 Dec. and 3 convoys totalling about 13,000 BRT on 20 Dec.

2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

Eleven planes were detected operating over the North Sea. On the morning of 19 Dec. reciprocal artillery fire without damage was reported from the area of Petsamo. On the afternoon of 18 Dec. 21 planes flew over the Petsamo area without dropping bombs.

There are no further sighting reports from either the air reconnaissance or the submarines in the area of Bear Island..

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According to the view of the 5th Air Force there are no signs of a PQ convoy on the way or an enemy combat group at sea. The reconnaissance forces available, lighting conditions and the weather conditions do not allow a further reconnaissance operation against the expected convoy on 20 Dec.

According to a review of the situation by Group North/Fleet and on the basis of information gained from radio intelligence a QP convoy or part of the same was observed. Neither observation was confirmed from any other source.

According to radio intelligence still another PQ convoy or part of the same may have started at the end of November and probably put into the ports of destination at the beginning of December. This information was confirmed by various observations (sighting of naval forces and merchant ships) made by submarines and the Air Force.

The Group therefore takes it as certain that a convoy was on the way during that time.

There are similar signs of PQ convoy presumed to be on the way at present. In addition to radio intelligence on the evening of 17 Dec. which detected certain steamers with Russian ports of destination, there are several reports of the sighting of enemy objectives from submarines operating off Bear Island. In addition to this, escorts were sighted and intercepted, and search-gear activity, depth charge pursuits and gunfire were reported.

The group therefore presumes that a convoy is at present under way. It is, however, uncertain whether it is still at sea or whether it has already put into port. The appearance of escorts is no proof of the passage of a convoy, as search groups can be put into action quite independently.

The Group thus asked the 5th Air Force to continue the execution of the reconnaissance, as far as the weather conditions and forces available allowed, adding that the Navy had done everything to detect the convoys and gain positive knowledge of the supply traffic. All submarines available were operating up to the limit of their capacity. Three submarines already on the way to the Atlantic will be transferred to that area.

The 5th Air Force answered that on account of weather conditions reconnaissance operations continue to be impossible since the aircraft search gear was no longer serviceable owing to strong icing. Without the search gear, however, there was no possibility of protection on account of the lighting and clouds.

Own Situation:

Twenty six planes were escorted north and 29 south. Owing to

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the lack of escorts the passage of 19 ships was delayed.

On 18 Dec. at 1705 the harbor defense boat NN "06" was rammed by the submarine U "711" in the north part of Tjeldsund. The harbor defense boat was beached and the crew was taken over by the submarine. Five men are missing, submarine U "711" was damaged.

At 1056 on 19 Dec. an explosion took place under water behind the stern of the patrol boat "5311" in the Stadlandet area, where the steamer ROALT JARL had been attacked by a submarine. The area was closed because of suspicion of mines. At 2340 the same day the steamer HANNES FREIYMANN (1,945 BRT) ran aground off Hellesoe; salvage operations are in progress. At 0012 on 17 Dec. the motor minesweeper R "305" ran aground in Hellesund. The boat was damaged and was towed in to Bergen.

With regard to the explosion in the transit ammunition dump in Oslo on 19 Dec. it is reported that it took place while the artillery ammunition for the Army and Navy was being unloaded from the steamer SELMA. Several 100 tons of naval ammunition were destroyed by the ensuing explosion of the ammunition already dumped in the shed. There was extensive damage in the vicinity of the dump. The steamer SELMA sank by the stern. Six naval personnel are missing. The cause is still obscure. There is possibility of sabotage or careless working when unloading the ship in contract work. For details see Telegram 1515.

Admiral attacked to the Fuehrer Headquarters was informed accordingly.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

The gunboat KRSANOJE SNAMJA, sunk by the Finns off Lavansaari, was lifted by the Russians and docked at Kronstadt.

2. Own Situation:

The convoys were partly held up in the Baltic Sea Entrances on account of the weather conditions. Otherwise nothing to report from the whole Baltic area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The reconnaissance for the submarine of Group "Borkum" in the

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North Atlantic was only weak and brought no result. The reconnaissance area was enlarged as far as 21 degrees 30 feet West. Submarine U "541" reported gunfire from BE 5517 at 2345. The area was at the same time reconnoitred by one of our planes without result. The boats are to proceed under water on 21 Dec. from dawn, course 210 degrees, speed two knots, and are to surface at 1900. It is intended that they proceed further southwest, as it is expected that a southbound convoy will pass the area further to the west on 22 Dec.

On 21 Dec. the new patrol lines are to be manned as follows:

Group "Sylt" from AL 1538 to 1932
Group "Amrum" " 4443 " 1715

Group "Föchr" " BD 3322 " BE 1473.

The patrol group "Borkum" will occupy the line from BE 3471 to 7622 on 21 Dec.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

Our reconnaissance sighted 35 merchantmen, ten patrol boats and two planes off Falmouth, course northeast.

One plane out of four FW 200's sent out to operate against the northbound convoy by Air Commander, Atlantic had to break off operations because the consumption of lubricant was too high, while the ship's search gear of two other planes went out of action. Another BV 222 took off in the evening.

During the night eleven planes carried out a harassing raids on London without losses to themselves.

By day several strong enemy bomber formations with fighter escort carried out attacks on building sites and caused heavy material damage to their target north of Abbeville. At least four enemy planes were shot down by our 150 fighters which went up in defense.

2. German Reich Territory:

During the morning hours several hundred enemy bombers strongly escorted by fighters carried out a new attack on Bremen, concentrating on the western suburb, the port area and the center of the city. The damage caused was serious. For details see Daily situation.

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fighter defense by 220 fighters and heavy fighters so far reported the shooting down of 26 planes.

In the evening hours several hundred enemy planes carried out attacks on Frankfurt-on-Main-, Offenbach, Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Mainz. For damage see Daily Situation.

The 3rd Air Force sent out 22 night fighters and reported that one enemy plane was shot down for certain, while the destruction of ten further planes is probable. There is no report yet from the Air Commander, Central Area on the number of planes sent out on operations and their successes.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

Our planes carried out reconnaissance in the area of the 2nd Air Force, 300 enemy planes were on operation in the front area, six of them were shot down by our anti-aircraft artillery.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast an attack was carried out on Sofia and the surrounding district without essential damage to military installations. Thirty-eight Bulgarian fighters shot down four enemy planes with four losses to themselves. At the same time a further attack with major forces was directed against the airfield of Eleusis, where eight planes were slightly damaged. Twenty seven of our fighters in co-operation with the anti-aircraft artillery shot down nine Fortresses and one fighter with one loss to themselves.

Seven reconnaissance planes were reported over the Aegean, and nine planes during the night were engaged supplying partisans.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

No special movements of convoys were observed in the Gibraltar area on 18 and 19 Dec.

The KING GEORGE Vth which put out from Gibraltar was escorted by a FIJI class cruiser. According to radio intelligence a

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Westbound convoy was in the area of Oran - Alboran on the evening of 20 Dec. An England - Mediterranean convoy was observed at the same time in the Gibraltar area.

Own Situation:

Two convoys, totalling 1,800 BRT were escorted off the south coast of France.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Photographic reconnaissance of Brindisi revealed the following shipping on the afternoon of 19 Dec. 1 monitor, 1 light cruiser, 3 destroyers, 3 vessels, presumably escorts, 1 vessel presumably a minelayer, 3 patrol boats, 1 submarine, 1 LCT 350, 1 special type of ship, 1 tanker, 1 transport, 16 freighters, 2 floating dock, etc. At 1415 the same day partial reconnaissance of Taranto revealed the following shipping: 7 cruisers, 18 destroyers, 11 escorts, 6 gunboats, 13 sub-chasers, 1 LST, 1 tanker, 18 freighters, 2 transports and 7 coastal vessels.

As compared with 14 Dec. there are eleven more warships in Taranto; as compared with 2 Dec. Brindisi shows a slight increase in warships. Thirty - 40 ships, allegedly landing craft, were southwest of Capri on the morning of 19 Dec.; no details could be observed.

Own Situation:

Convoy traffic was hindered by the weather. Operations could not be carried out for the same reason.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

On the evening of 18 Dec. an attempt at landing weak partisan forces were repulsed 20 miles southeast of Split. Late in the afternoon of 19 Dec. continuous enemy landings by 5 landing craft from the north coast of the island of Brac to the mainland was reported. The anti-aircraft carrier NIOBE, which was to have operated with torpedo boats, ran aground at 1900 off Selve, 27 miles northwest of Zara. An ocean-going tug boat was sent out from Fiume to carry out salvage operations. The NIOBE was ineffectively attacked with bombs by 24 enemy planes at 1300 on 19 Dec. One of the attacking planes was shot down.

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During the night of 19 Dec. the PT boats S "36" and S "56" left Cataaro as planned for the island operation, but they did not contact the enemy.

At 0430 on 20 Dec. the boats fired on the harbor and town of Lissa; only slight defense by light machine guns was observed.

One of our submarines is operating west of Lissa - Lastovo.

X-day for operation "Herbstgewitter" was ordered to be 22 Dec. Since the NIOBE and the torpedo boat TA "21" were put out of action only torpedo boats TA "20" and "22" remain operational.

b. Aegean Sea:

During the night of 17 Dec. enemy planes flew over the harbor and roadstead of Naxos in a low-level attack. It is likely that aerial mines were dropped.

During the night of 19 Dec. Salamis and the Bay of Eleusis was attacked by six enemy planes. Shipping was prohibited owing to suspicion of mines. In the course of a major attack on the airfield of Eleusis on the afternoon of 20 Dec. four of the attacking planes were shot down, two of them by naval anti-aircraft artillery.

A convoy on the way to Rhodes successfully repulsed an attack by two enemy planes. Otherwise the escort service was carried out according to plan.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence the destroyer "G" and one minesweeper are in the southeast sea area, probably on the way to Novorossisk. A diving submarine was sighted off Jalta.

Own Situation:

Submarine pursuit in the area of Cape Tarchankutsk was carried out by two sub-chasers as planned.

At noon one sub-chaser was attacked with torpedoes without result by two planes.

The convoy traffic proceeded according to plan.

According to an intelligence report a Turkish steamer struck a floating mine in the northwestern exit to the Bosphorus on 16 Dec. and sank.

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The evacuation of the Cherson bridgehead was carried out despite the difficulties due to ice.

Group South reported that the Rumanian Navy Minister agreed to the enlargement of the dockyard in Odessa in order to compensate for the loss of dockyard capacity in the east; he refused, however, to hand over the dockyard or its technical direction to the Germans, referring to the decision of Antonescu. The Minister gave his verbal agreement to the engagement of a qualified German for confidential collaboration with the Rumanians in the direction of the dockyard. The Minister consented to the transfer of Russian workers and machines to Odessa. The Group asks for the intervention of the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The dissolution of the party militia ordered by Franco, and the decreased influence of the Falange in other fields is a fact worth noting.

According to Reuter, agreement on a purely military basis is said to have been reached in the course of discussions between Tito, an Allied delegation and the Yugoslav exile government in Cairo.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. During the report of the Chief, Naval Staff and the Quartermaster General, Naval Staff, Chief of Naval Staff confirmed the correctness of the attitude taken by Naval Group West as regards the discontinuation of construction on the battery Greville (See War Diary 18 Dec.).

II. The Operations Staff/Quartermaster, Armed Forces High Command issued a list of instructions for the Military Commander in Greece, the German Plenipotentiary General in Albania, the independent Military Administration Headquarters in Montenegro.

For copy as per 1/Skl 43173/43 Gkdos. see the records of Situation Maps and Files Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff.

No comments appended by Naval Staff.

III. Group North/Fleet gives its opinion on the plan for the construction of destroyers and objects to the project of a slow and weakly armed 6-engined destroyer. For copy as per 1/Skl 42767/43 Gkdos. see records of Chief of Surface Vessel Constructional Planning Branch, Naval Staff.

IV. Operations Division, Naval Staff discussed the attitude taken by the Air Force Operations Staff with regard to the observations made by the 9th torpedo Boat Flotilla on the use of 7 cm guns by British planes of the "Hudson" type in the Aegean in Mid-November. According to them the gun flashes and reports observed are probably attributable to rocket projectiles. However, this assumption has not yet been confirmed.

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V. During the report made by the General, Air Reconnaissance to Chief of Naval Staff, a recently completed 3-days' course of instruction was discussed between high-ranking staff officers of the Army and Air Force.

The Chief, Naval Staff expressed the wish that a similar course of instruction be held for naval officers. This wish is in line with the order from the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff of 10 Dec. which aims at the promotion of mutual understanding between the three branches of the Armed Forces and refers to the course of instruction arranged at the Air Force Academy, the appointment of Liaison officers, as well as the establishment of an Air Training Command, Baltic. In connection with this the High Command, Army, the Navy and the SS Operations Headquarters are asked to submit their demands with regard to co-operation in training and instruction in the near future.

In replying to the General, Air Reconnaissance the Chief, Naval Staff restricted himself to the most urgent problem, and emphasized the necessity of improving the co-operation between the Navy and the Air Force in submarine warfare in the North Atlantic first. In accordance with this the General, Air Reconnaissance suggested the following to the Air Force, Operations Staff:

1. Reinforcement of the air reconnaissance in accordance with the promise made by the Commander in Chief, Air Force to the Chief, Naval Staff;

2. The arrangement of a joint course of instruction for the Air Force and submarine branch at Angers.

A corresponding proposal from the Air Force, Operations Staff is now awaited. The extension of discussions to matters affecting the western area, as for instance co-operation during landing operations and collaboration between the Air Force and Commander, PT boats should be left to other training courses. The final goal should be the covering of all areas affected, including those outside the western area.

VI. With regard to the Fuehrer Directive 51, in order to insure that matters are handled in an official manner, such as the transfer of home-based alarm units whatever happens - even in the event of a transitory breakdown of commands from High Command, Navy (due to enemy action) - the Naval Command, East, Special Staff A has been ordered to carry out these tasks, should it become necessary, on receipt of a keyword.

Forycopy Skl Qu a II Mob 3723/43 Gkdos. Chofs. see records of Fleet Operations Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff.

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Situation 21 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to an Intelligence report Madeira was occupied by British troops early in the morning. Further disembarkation is in progress. British-Portuguese discussions have taken place recently on the establishment of a submarine base and a seaplane base in Funchal.

2. Own Situation:

According to a report from the Japanese Navy to the Naval Attache, Tokyo, the KIEFER plans to arrive at point "Tannenwald" on 30 Dec.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the BOGATO by radiogram accordingly.

The OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER were informed in Radiogram 2115 that on the basis of additional observations, ONS "25" did not leave until a later date, so that the dates for the position lines of the convoy which were transmitted on 16 Dec. must be postponed by at least one day.

In addition to this the two blockade-runners received the usual weather report for 22 Dec. according to which a swift and transient storm depression is forecast in the eastern part of the Bay of Biscay, and a deterioration in the weather developing from the west in the western part. By day mostly good visibility to be expected, westerly to northwesterly winds, strength 4-5, and only occasional showers of rain.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Twenty nine planes were detected over the Bay of Biscay and ten in the area of the Azores squadrons. Single British vessels were located in each of the following: at 0940 in BE 4911; at 0950 in BE 1813, at 1749 in AM 7440 and at 1819 in AL 9390. Six FW 200's with radar gear were engaged in reconnaissance in the western Bay of Biscay and one Ju 290 with ships' search gear southwest of Ireland.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One mine was cleared west of the Parquette lighthouse.

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At 1025 the steamer LINZ (PIETRO ORSEOLO) sank to a depth of 25 m in the course of the attempt to tow the ship to a more favorable spot for discharging, and despite the greatest efforts to salvage it.

Group West changed the cover names for the blockade runners, effective from 17 Dec. 0000:

TANNENFELS	-	REIHER
PIETRO ORSEOLO	-	LINZ
HIMALAYA	-	BODENSEE
RECUM	-	HECHT
NORDMEER	-	MOLDAU
SCHWARZES MEER	-	BOZEN
RASTENBURG	-	FISCHOTTER
IDA		AALEN

On 8 Dec. the Commander of the 9th Destroyer Flotilla, Narvik issued orders for the joint operation of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla for operations BERNAU and TAVE respectively, and submitted them for information.

The order, which allows for every eventuality in an exhaustive and imaginative form, shows how poorly our tactical regulations answer the needs of the command. Operational orders would not need to be so extensive if we had trained units at our disposal or if we possessed adequate tactical service regulations. After the completion of the operation, Operations Division, Naval Staff will take this matter up.

Channel Coast:

The convoy of the steamer IDA anchored off Jersey because of engine trouble. It is scheduled to proceed as far as Le Havre during the night of 21 Dec. The 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, which was sent out to act as escort, put into Brest at 1000.

The minefield N 13 was laid as planned during the night of 20 Dec.

One ELM mine was cleared north NIEUPORT on 20 Dec.

The laying of the minefield N 14 is scheduled to take place during the night of 21 Dec.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The convoy "473" left Borkim for the Hook. By day there

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was a restricted escort and minesweeping service and it was discontinued by night. One mine was cleared north of Borkum.

Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North again asked for approval for the shifting of the Friesen fairway. This would make it necessary to sweep barrage 4.

Naval Staff has consented to the clearance of this barrage.

On 16 Dec the Naval Command, North informed the Naval Staff of the instructions to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North and Admiral Netherlands regarding the project for Ground mine barrages against enemy landings approved by the Naval Staff. Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North is charged with the execution of the whole project as well as with the individual planning. The following keywords were ordered for the execution:

- a. Keyword "Schiller" means: all mine carriers provided for this action are to be loaded and to be kept at immediate readiness.
- b. Keyword "Goethe" means: the barrages are to be laid up at once.

If this keyword is not provided by the keyword "Schiller" it means: the mine carriers are to be loaded and the barrages are to be laid immediately.

Admiral Netherlands is also entitled to release the keyword "Goethe", if necessary with the numbers of the barrages to be laid out, should it be recognized that the enemy intends a landing in his area, and as long as it is fairly certain that the barrages can be laid within the time available.

2. Noway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Over the North Sea eleven planes were detected on reconnaissance from the Shetlands to the northwest. According to radio monitoring exercises were carried out in the Scapa area during the night.

One plane was reported north of Bergen on 19 and 20 Dec.

At 1050 our air reconnaissance sighted a merchantmen of 3,000 BRT and an escort, probably an auxiliary cruiser, 10 miles south of the Faeroes, course 20 degrees. There are no further reconnaissance report.

Own Situation:

The LODY, torpedo boat T "28" and the BRUMMER entered Kristiansand South at 1530 for the reinforcement of the Skagerrak patrol.

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At 0900 the BEITZEN put to sea from Stavanger, making for a home port.

Twenty five ships were escorted north and 57 ships south. Twenty-one ships remained in harbor.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

V. Submarine Warfare.

There are no special reports concerning the operations of groups "Borkum" and "Foehr" in the North Atlantic.

On 18 Dec. submarine U "284" reported heavy sea damage from AK 60. As it is impossible for the boat to make the return passage while unable to dive, the crew was ordered to transfer to submarine U "629" and to sink submarine U "284". Submarine U "629" is on the way back and will hand over half of the crew of submarine U "284" to submarine U "544" in AK 90.

It is presumed that submarine U "391" was sunk by enemy planes in the Bay of Biscay while returning home.

There are no special reports from the remaining operational areas.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the evening some of our planes carried out a harassing raid on London.

By day major enemy forces flew over Belgium and northern France and carried out an attack on airfields and a building site. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down three of the attacking planes, while one plane was shot down by fighters.

2. German Reich Territory:

During the attack on Bremen on 20 Dec. our air defense forces shot down 47 planes for certain, while the destruction of 17 further planes is probable. During the night attack in the area of Frankfurt/Mainz 48 enemy planes were reported shot down for certain. Three hundred and thirty one of our night fighters were sent up in defense.

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During the night of 21 Dec. light enemy forces attacked the area of Wuppertal - Koblenz - Trier and dropped single bombs. A single plane was reported over Fuerth, another one in the area of Muenster.

During the month of November altogether 24 enemy minelaying planes were shot down in the combat area of the fighter division, Heligoland Bight - Skagerrak, - Kattegat.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

At about 0810 the 2nd Air Force sent out 32 Ju 88's for operation against the westbound convoy consisting of 33 freighters and five escorts located 210 miles northwest of Benghazi. Nine of these planes had technical difficulty, 15 did not find the convoy, two were lost. At 1645 eight planes were over the target and probably sank a freighter of 5,000 BRT and damaged a freighter of the same size.

About 400 enemy planes were operating over the front area concentrating on the right flank. In addition to this two airfields in the Italian area were attacked.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast nine planes were reported carrying out reconnaissance over the Aegean by day and one by night; one plane carried out reconnaissance in the area of Bucarest while three planes were reported supplying partisans in the Balkan area.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

At 0700 a convoy consisting of 51 merchantmen and six escorts passed Gibraltar coming from the west. At 1045 they were followed by 13 freighters and four escorts, while a transport and 9 freighters, also from the west, put into Gibraltar.

According to radio monitoring a westbound convoy was detected near the Straits of Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

At 1325 a submarine was reported 140 miles south of Toulon, course 200 degrees. A harbor defense boat, which ran aground in the Toulon area was refloated with the assistance of tugs.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the evening PT boats S "57" and S "60" left Via Reggio for the execution of the minelaying operation "Dragoner". Small PT boats were called back from operations for transfer to the Adriatic. The coastal traffic was carried out as planned. The strike in Genoa is slowing down. The dockyards are working again.

3. Area Naval Command South:a. Adriatic:

The anti-aircraft cruiser NIOBE is lying with her starboard bow aground on the rocks off Selve; she is leaking, but it can be held.

After refuelling in Pola, torpedo boat TA "20" will be engaged in operations in the area north of Brac during the night of 21 Dec. By day the boat is to take up waiting position in the Trogir area.

The operation of PTboats S "55" and S "36" against partisan shipping and the island of Lissa was broken off because one of the boats had engine trouble.

b. Aegean Sea:

On 20 Dec. at 1850 a naval landing craft escorted by a "Q" ship and an armed fishing vessel fought a short engagement with a surfaced enemy submarine which withdrew by diving. At 0855 on 21 Dec. an enemy submarine fired on an auxiliary sailing vessel south of Lemnos. The battery on land took part in the fight.

A landing party with assault boats is engaged in mopping-up operations on the Cyclades Islands not occupied by German Troops. They are operating in two groups from Santorin and Syra and will have completed their operation in about 14 days.

Four mines were cleared in the Chalkis passage. The Straits of Salamis were opened to shipping again.

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c. Black Sea.

At about noon the sub-chaser UJ "103" was attacked by an enemy submarine southeast of Tarchankutsh. The submarine hunt continues. Owing to unfavorable weather conditions no PT boats were sent out on operations. The minesweeping and minclearance work was carried out as planned. Three naval landing craft with five assault guns from Odessa put into AK Mechet.

Group South and Admiral, Black Sea received the following instructions from Naval Staff:

"I. Personnel from units in the Crimea, who are not in the Crimea at present owing to leave or for other reasons, are not to return to the Crimea.. This personnel is placed at the disposal of Naval Group South for the more urgent task of setting up the Dodecanese units.

2. Naval Group South to report the state of preparation reached by the Dodecanese units, very particularly that of the naval artillery detachments."

The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea reported in return to Group Command, South that with the execution of this order the Crimea would be starved of personnel, thereby rendering successful defense uncertain (see Radiogram 2131).

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

In a strictly confidential Portuguese consulate report which has come to hand, the consul in Cardiff made among other things the following statement on 22 Nov.:

"It would be a mistake to believe that troops are no longer being concentrated in Scotland and that they have been dispersed. They are on the contrary kept in constant readiness in connection with an attack on the continent, though it is believed that this will not begin until the first months of 1944 and only after a single Supreme Command for all European operations against Germany and her Allies has been set up. It is likewise a mistake to believe that with regard to the end of the war exclusive optimism prevails in Great Britain. It is evident that the upper and even the middle classes greatly fear the consequences of a total defeat of Germany by the advance of the U.S.S.R.; this is probably the reason for the Anglo-American endeavor to bring all military operations including those of the Russians together under a joint command which would enable a Russian attack on Europe to be checked when it became necessary and prevent their taking advantage of the supremacy achieved, and the anarchy which would inevitably result."

According to an Intelligence report which the Finnish Military Attache received from an allegedly reliable agent in Anglo-American circles, Marshal Tschakmak will get a new appointment as representative of the President of the State after the resignation of the Chief of the General Staff on 12 Jan. 1944.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff returned from Fuehrer Headquarters. For memorandum of the discussions as per 1/Skl 4067/43 Gkdos, Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VII.

II. As regards the question of the Danube monitors Operations Division, Naval Staff has been ordered to send demands to Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff has been ordered to send demands to Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff or the Naval Construction Division, Bureau of Naval Armament as regards seagoing monitors which can be employed on the lower Danube, as well as in the Straits of Kerch. The Chief, Naval Staff is of the opinion that new constructions are not necessary but that the existing types can be fitted out with the engines and armament on hand. Armament of up to 10.5 cm is expected. The Operations Division, Naval Staff has sent its demands to the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff. For copy of the letter 1/Skl I opa. 42922/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C; Vol. XIV a.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

III. Chief of Operations Branch, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that the Commander of the German Naval Command, Italy is now also of the opinion that there was not much hope that the three fairly large passenger ships it was intended to use would pull off a break-through the Straits of Sicily, whereas he was very adamant concerning the possibilities of success with small ships which were fast and inconspicuous.

Furthermore it is to be doubted whether, in view of enemy action in the Aegean it would be possible for such large ships to remain in that area at all for any length of time.

The Chief, Naval Staff decides that such a risk cannot be run, all the more since crews for these ships are not available, or their loss, in the event of the ships being sunk, would mean a severe blow.

IV. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reports that Admiral Ferrini suggested that Admiral Bertoldi be sent to the Naval Staff in Berlin as a naval attache and at the same time liaison officer. The Chief, Naval Staff has no objection to Admiral Bertoldi personally. However, as regards his appointment as an attache, this matter must still be discussed with the Foreign Office and the Armed Forces High Command.

Operations Division, Naval Staff will take the necessary steps.

V. Army Situation:

The enemy attacks in the area of Nikopol decreased considerably. The large-scale defensive battle in the area of Krivoregrad has now been going on for seven whole weeks. The gap between Army Group South and the Central Area has now been closed by the successful operations of the 16th Armored Division.

In general the Army Staff is of the opinion that the total result of the enemy large-scale autumn offensive did not yield the expected success. The subsequent winter offensive with attacks concentrated in the Newel and Zhitomir areas is also generally faced with confidence.

Special Items.

I. The discussions in Danzig made it evident that the Commander, Naval Air Training, Baltic is not able to comply with the demands of the 20th Submarine Flotilla for the transfer of planes for the training of submarine crews.

Chief of Staff/Naval Staff therefore addressed the following personal teletype to the Chief of the Air Force, General Staff, General Korten:

"Since it has proved impossible to obtain Italian aircraft for submarine training purposes and the new discussions in Danzig have shown that the Commander, Naval Air Training, Baltic is not in a position to place at our disposal the number and type of planes necessary for the training of the submarine crews, the exercises for the 20th Submarine Flotilla scheduled to commence on 4 Jan. cannot be carried out. The boats must therefore go to the front without having completed the exercises for defense against their most dangerous enemy. Therefore as an immediate measure and considering the strained situation with regard to planes I request that five Ju 88's with two crews be placed at the disposal of the 20th Submarine Flotilla for the exercises starting 4 Jan. I would be much obliged to you for a personal answer as soon as possible, since this training is of great importance to the Commander in Chief, Navy and are previous endeavors with the offices concerned have not brought any result. I believe that your personal intervention, for which I most earnestly beg, is now the only way out.

II. With regard to the future increasing distances between mines, owing to decrease in the numbers allocated, it would be technically possible to protect the mines against underwater location from enemy submarines by means of a suitable device which destroys eacho-ranging impulses by absorption.

To this the Underwater Obstacles Branch, Bureau of Naval Armament reported that no experiences had yet been made with the Alberich instrument at the front. The first submarine equipped with it put to sea three months ago. The Underwater Obstacles Branch, Bureau of Naval Armament does not see any technical difficulties in carrying out technical experiments of this kind, and will continue working in this field.

Group South has been informed to this effect.

III. On 9 Dec. Group South submitted a report from the German Naval Command, Constanta on the securing of personnel and equipment of the Italian Submarine Flotilla subordinate to Admiral, Black Sea by the Rumanian Navy on 1 Dec. 1943. For copy of the report as per 1/Skl 42800/43 Gkdes. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

IV. In Field Marshal Rommel's report to the Armed Forces High Command on the defensive readiness of Denmark, of which Operations Division, Naval Staff was informed on the basis of the insight granted Rear Admiral Ruge, it is stated under the heading "Local Defensive Readiness, Navy":

Offensive:

The following craft are being prepared for operations

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in the harbors of southern Norway:

- 4 destroyers
- 4 torpedo boats
- 1 PT boat training flotilla and about
- 20 submarines.

These vessels will be sufficient to inflict severe damage on the enemy and greatly harass him if they detect him on the approach. Timely warning from the Air Force is imperative. Reinforcement of the task force, (for the time being consisting of the SHARNHORST and six to eight destroyers) after two days at the earliest, by 20 torpedo boats of different fighting qualities, 1-2 PT Boat Training Flotillas and about 40 submarines after 1 - 3 days.

Defensive:

The patrol boats occupying only a few positions do not in the least degree suffice for the complete coverage of the coastal zone. They can be reinforced at the first signs of a landing by reconnaissance or patrol lines of the above-mentioned destroyers, torpedo boats and PT boats."

On the grounds of the discussion between the naval liaison officer attached to Army Group B, Rear Admiral Ruge and the Naval Staff on 15 Dec. and in cognizance of the above paragraph, the following order was sent to Rear Admiral Ruge by Operations Division, Naval Staff:

"1. The distribution of surface forces is aimed at defending the western area, Denmark and southern Norway against enemy invasion. Operational orders have been issued.

2. At first two, and starting January two further destroyers and one torpedo boat flotilla with two boats will be stationed in the Skagerrak. The transfer of a further flotilla, for the time being attached to the Torpedo School, is projected for the spring.

3. In case of a large-scale enemy attack on Denmark - southern Norway the training unit, fleet (at present operational: ADMIRAL SCHEER, PRINZ EUGEN, NUERNBERG, LEIPZIG, EMDEN, SCHLESSEN) as well as the destroyers, torpedo boats and PT boats in the Baltic engaged in training or attached to school will be transferred to that area. Preliminary measures for the improvement of operational readiness and the provision of supplies are being taken by Group North/Fleet.

4. The transfer of the PT boat Flotillas from the western area to bases in the Heligoland Bight or southern Norway is being prepared.

5. The reinforcement of escort formations must be discontinued for the time being.

6. All naval landing craft available will be fitted out as artillery carriers as fast as possible at cost of other projects.

The final aim is to assign 30 artillery naval landing craft to the Commanding Admiral, Defense, North (Commanding Admiral; Defenses, West about 50, Norway 25). Commanding Admiral, Defenses North has at present about 10 at his disposal fresh allocation of ten by 31 Dec. and ten more by 31 March.

7. The precautionary transfer of fairly large numbers of submarines is impracticable since this would leave the North Atlantic empty. There are always twelve boats in the Norwegian area; about half of them are operational. It is intended to concentrate these boats together with boats leaving for the Atlantic and those on the return passage for operations in the North Sea, as well as the transfer of the boats operating in the Northern Waters".

V. The copy 1/Skl I k 3761/43 Gkdes. Chfs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV throws light on a discussion that took place on 22 Dec. between the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff and the Japanese deputy Naval Attache, Commander Taniguti.

VI. In the course of a second naval armament discussion it was stated among other things that the provision of manpower for the production of torpedo expulsion tubes is still in arrears by 1,200 persons.

Furthermore it was requested that repair work and the remaining work on submarines be accelerated at the cost of the new construction on type VII C-boats.

As regards the failure to reach the promised production level within the 3.7 cm anti-aircraft artillery program, it was stated that the equipment of 20 boats will be delayed by one month. Ammunition is still available in adequate quantities.

Finally the possibility of building naval landing craft in France was discussed, where a dockyard at Chalons sur Saone may be considered.

Situation 22 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

The Etappe, Tokyo reports that the KIEFER will be supplied with the fuel for the first time on 29 Dec. at point "Tannenwald". Following this the BOGOTA and the KIEFER will proceed in company as far as point "Kiefernwald" where the second supply will take place about 6 days after the first one. After that the BOGOTA will be detached to make for Djakarta. Three days' run after the dispatch of the BOGOTA, the KIEFER will report on the execution of the supply and the estimated time of arrival of the BOGOTA at point "Lille". Details of the passage and supply operations were discussed between the KIEFER and the BOGOTA in Singapore.

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II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Sixty nine planes were detected operating over the outer Bay of Biscay as far as 12 degrees W. At 1435 our air reconnaissance reported an aircraft carrier in BE 5579, a destroyer with several escort units, course west, medium speed. One British vessel was detected in BE 7660 at 1309.

Group West intends to make some alteration in the system of the carrier reporting only after the landing of the planes.

Foreign Armies, West transmitted an intelligence report from a particularly reliable source, dated 18 Dec. regarding shipping conditions in Great Britain. According to this report the ship concentrations in the south and southwestern harbors were increased to 230 - 250,000 BRT, in South Wales to 300- 320,000 BRT. Also in Northwest England the invasion flotilla is gradually increasing. Unusually large ship concentrations were reported off Liverpool. Ferry ships are still lying in harbors in the west of England, five in Bristol alone.

In this connection it is gathered from one of the reports from the Portuguese consulate that a number of old passenger ships with a high tonnage have been transferred to British harbors from the Pacific.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Two submarines were escorted in. One mine was cleared off Brest, three off La Pallice.

Task "BERNAU":

Group West took over the command of the BERNAU by radiogram to the OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER, and informed these ships of our air operations. Group West also informed the two blockade runners of the aircraft carrier group sighted in BE 5579, expressing the view that this was the flank protection of a southbound convoy, proceeding on western course for tactical reasons (to allow fighters to take off) so that there was no danger of a collision if the BERNAU proceeded on her course as planned.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 21 Dec. the convoy of the steamer IDA reached Le Havre, and continued at 1730 escorted by the 24th PT Boat Flotilla.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea:

Owing to stormy weather the convoy "473" broke off its passage to the west and put into Den Helder. Some of the patrol boat positions were withdrawn. There was no mine-sweeping and mine clearance activity. Six convoys totalling 95,290 BRT were carried out in Zeeland Waters. The naval anti-aircraft artillery reported that one Fortress was shot down in the Ymuiden area.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Twenty four planes were detected on reconnaissance over the North Sea. Five planes were over the area from Feiestedin to Lindesnes on armed reconnaissance. According to radio intelligence two of our destroyers and five merchant ships were reported 20 miles northwest of Egersund at 1020; also an attack with aerial torpedoes on our minesweepers and unknown craft, no hits observed. According to further radio intelligence reports the VALIANT and the cruiser KENT were in Scapa.

At 1045 two planes flying independently of one another reported at least 40 merchant ships, including and probably one aircraft carrier, course 40 degrees - 60 degrees, speed 10 knots in AE 6983 according to uncertain visual reconnaissance. The formation was not detected again by later reconnaissance. During the night of 22 Dec. three vessels were detected by our air reconnaissance with radar 70 miles north-northeast of the Faeroes; a fairly large vessel was detected 90 miles west of Kristiansand.

The formation of warships reported on 18 Dec. west of Breman-ger was not detected by any other station despite adequate visibility.

On the basis of exact data the convoy traffic between Great Britain and the Russian Arctic ports was resumed around mid-November after an interruption of about nine months. The available data shows that for the time being the traffic to the Russian ports is running at roughly fourteen-day intervals. Investigations by Naval Intelligence Division has not yet revealed whether the present traffic is proceeding from Iceland, as formerly, or from British ports. Also the strength of the traffic cannot yet be estimated. The first convoy of the new traffic period consisted of at least 19 ships. Naval Intelligence Division considers it possible that the resumption of the supply traffic to Russia is a result of the Moscow Conference.

The Naval Intelligence Division has informed the front commands concerned, i.e. the Armed Forces High Command, Army General

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Staff, and Air Force; Operations Staff by letter. For copy as per 53008/43 geh. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

Own Situation:

For report of the Naval Command, Norway on the ammunition explosion in Oslo, see Telegram 1840.

At 1134 two of five attacking enemy planes were shot down by the minesweeper M "489" and submarine U "1062" south of Farsund. The submarine was slightly damaged.

Forty three ships were escorted north, and 37 south. Eleven ships remained in harbor owing to lack of escorts.

On the basis of information regarding another PQ convoy, the Chief, Naval Staff has ordered the immediate transfer of three further submarines for operations in Northern Waters. At 1830 Submarine Division, Naval Staff placed submarines U "425" and U "956" lying in Bergen as well as submarine U "973" lying in Kiel, under command of Group North/Fleet, instructing the Commanding Admiral, Submarines to allocate the six newly detached boats to a flotilla in the area of Commander, Submarines, Norway.

Group North/Fleet ordered the Task Force to 3-hours' notice.

The available submarines U "716" and U "314" left Dronthelm and Bergen to reinforce the patrol line in the Bear Island area.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

The BEITZEN put into Kristiansand South.

One mine was cleared east of Aarhus. Otherwise nothing to report from the Baltic area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The Submarine Group "Borkum" was not detailed to operate against the aircraft carrier formation reported sailing north of it in BE 5599 at 1435, since the operation of submarines draws increased enemy air reconnaissance, and the operation of submarines draws increased enemy air reconnaissance, and this was undesired in the interests of the awaited blockade runner. In addition to this the chances of a successful operation against the fast moving aircraft carrier were only slight in the prevailing heavy westerly storm.

Group "Borkum" was ordered to occupy the patrol line from BE 7426 to 8411 for 23 Dec.

The groups "Ruegen" 1-6 were foremed from the groups "Sylt", "Amrum" and "Foehr" and two outward-bound boats; they are to occupy small patrol lines of three boats each in grid square AL.

Nothing to report from the remaining area of operations.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

During the night of 22 Dec. 13 of our fighter-bombers carried out a harassing raid on Eastbourne. Two FW 190's are missing.

By day the enemy carried out an attack on five building sites in Belgium and northern France. The damage was slight. A formation consisting of 300 planes with strong fighter cover flew over the area of Amiens in the noon hours, without carrying out any attacks. Minor forces carried out flights over the sea and coastal area of western France. Two enemy planes were destroyed.

2. German Reich Territory:

Early in the afternoon strong bomber formations with fighter protection and cover formations penetrated the Osnabrueck - Munster area by way of Holland. Two hundred and ninety six fighters and heavy fighters sent up for the defense shot down eight enemy planes for certain, and probably destroyed 18 others; 23 of our planes were lost. Attacks were carried out on Rheine, Munster, Osnabrueck, and Handorf airport, as well as on 26 other localities in the attack area. During the night single planes dropped bombs in the districts of Frankfurt and Bonn.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

About 210 enemy planes were observed in the front area. Three of them were brought down by anti-aircraft artillery.

In the area of the Air Force Command, Southeast the enemy carried out reconnaissance over the Aegean. In the area west of Zythere one of our small steamers was sunk, two further steamers were damaged.

4. Eastern Front:

For results of the reconnaissance see "Enemy Situation Northern Waters". Otherwise nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

At 0815 a convoy consisting of eleven steamers and four escorts and at 0950 a CAIRO class cruiser left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean.

According to radio intelligence a British vessel was located between Majorca and Minorca on 21 Dec. at 1728.

The same day at 1315 three destroyers of the DUNLOP class and five frigates were sighted off Ceuta, and at 1500 seven vessels, probably destroyers, were sighted from Tangier, all heading for the Atlantic.

According to radio intelligence the U. K. - Mediterranean convoy, which passed Gibraltar on 21 Dec. was in the sea area of Oran on the evening of 22 Dec.; a U. S. - Mediterranean convoy was in the narrow sea area west of Gibraltar in the afternoon.

Own Situation:

At 1030 a crash boat off Mentone was attacked by two U. S. planes with bombs and machine-guns; the personnel suffered casualties. At 1550 an enemy submarine attacked the sub-chaser "6076" with quadruple fan off Toulon; the sub-chaser was sunk. Fifteen survivors were rescued.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance 20 ships were detected south of Salerno on 21 Dec.; no time given, course northwest, probably bound for Naples. There are no further reports on the northwest-bound convoy consisting of 33 units which was sailing 130 miles southeast of Malta on the morning of 21 Dec.

Own Situation:

During the night of 21/22 Dec. the minelaying operation "Dragoner" was carried out as planned in the Bonifacio Strait. Both PT boats were continuously located from Corsica on their way out and back. With this operation, in the course of which the 3,000th mine was laid since 8 Sept. 1943, PT boats are to be sent to Feno for dismantling.

A combat group of naval landing craft is on transfer to Porto Fino for the control of PT boats on the coastal routes.

The strike in Genoa has come to an end.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic:

Enemy Situation:

According to an Intelligence report British and American soldiers in small groups landed on Lissa during the night of 14 Dec.

Landings by partisans north of Brac and west of Trogir are to be expected.

Own Situation:

At 0205 the anti-aircraft carrier NIOBE was hit by two torpedoes, probably from a submarine off Solvo, and broke in two. Up till now 19 killed and 15 seriously wounded have been reported. The rest of the crew was brought to Pola by tug. The tug PARENCO was also sunk.

The operation "Herbstgewitter" aimed at the occupation of Corcula has begun. According to a report from the Naval liaison officer attached to the Second Panzer Army Command at 1100, two waves had landed on Corcula. So far no boats were lost. All torpedo boats of foreign origin went out of action at the beginning of the operation. Torpedo boats TA "22" and "21" will probably be operational again by the evening of 23 Dec.

Torpedo boat TA "20" is operational with one propeller only.

PT boats S "36" and "55" left Cattaro in the afternoon as planned for the operation against partisan shipping. The boats were, however, forced to return because of weather conditions.

The Island of Lopud, west of Dubrovnik, is manned by a battery of Army coast artillery, for the time being without guns.

Admiral, Adriatic reports that owing to a further post-operation of the island operation the bauxite traffic remains paralysed.

b. Aegean Sea:

Torpedo boats TA "14" and "15" fought an enemy submarine with depth charges off Carlovassi (Samos). The 9th Torpedo Boat Flotilla considers its destruction certain. For details see Telegram 1830.

The presence of a further submarine was suspected 3 miles west of Leros at 1445.

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Convoys were carried out as planned and without any incidents. Three further mines were cleared in the Chalkis passage.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence the destroyer "G" and two minelayers were in the area of Gelendjik - Anapa.

Own Situation:

During the night of 21 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch was manned by three naval landing craft. The boats made no contact with the enemy. During the night of 22 Dec. three naval landing craft were at 1-hour's notice in Kamysh Burun.

An enemy raft with 25 men was set on fire off Kolanka (Kerch) by a battery of the naval artillery detachment 613, and only six men reached the shore.

An operation with five boats of the 1st PT Boat Flotilla against the supply traffic off Cape Utrish and Cape Idokopas is planned for the night of 22 Dec.

Submarine U "19" left Constanta on enemy patrol.

On the morning of 21 Dec. 52 seriously wounded prisoners of war were burnt when a lighter in Sevastopol caught fire, in spite of the immediate measures which were taken to put it out.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Commander in Chief of the Southeast Asia Command in New - Delhi, Admiral Lord Mountbatten announced that all units of the R. A. F. and the American Army Air Force in the Southeast Asia theater of operations will be united in a single Allied Air Force under the command of General Sir Richard Peirse as "Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Southeast Asia Command". At first all combat formations of the 10th U. S. Air Force and Royal Air Force Command in India will be united in an "Eastern Air Command". The tactical Air Force within the "Eastern Air Command". The tactical Air Force within the "Eastern Air Command" will be commanded by a British, the strategic Air Force by an American general.

The Secretary of the Navy Knox declared that from 13 to 20 Dec. 71 operations were carried out in the Pacific by more than 1,500 bombers escorted by fighters. During all these attacks the enemy resistance in the air had been only weak.

Reporting on the result of the discussion with Bose in Singapore, the Naval Attache, Tokyo states that further combined

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enemy operations against Burma, the Andamans, and perhaps Penang as well, are to be expected.

Items of Political Importance.

According to Reuter, Tito was appointed an Allied Commander in Chief on the grounds of a decision reached at the Conference in Alexandria. Thus General Mihailovitch makes his exit and the British military commission attached to his headquarters has been withdrawn. The Yugoslavian exile government in Cairo still categorically refuses to recognize the Tito regime.

The Chief, Naval Staff has gone to France in order to be with the submarine flotillas in Brest on the evening of 24 Dec., with the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla and the units of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West in Rouen on the evening of 25 Dec., and with Group West on 26 Dec.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

Radio intercept report 51/43 contains a summary of enemy information gained from radio deciphering and radio monitoring for the period 13 to 19 Dec.

Situation 23 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence HX "271" sailed as planned. The ALSTERUFER was informed by Radiogram 1915.

2. Own Situation:

The weather report and forecast for 24 Dec. was transmitted to the ALSTERUFER by radiogram. After strong post depression weather during the night, partly stormy northwest winds by day, changing cloud and good visibility, in the afternoon gradual clouding up and further increase of winds from west is to be expected.

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In Radiogram 1020 the Chief, Naval Staff sent his best wishes for Christmas to the crews of all ships at sea and in foreign waters engaged in the fight against Great Britain.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty five planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay. In the outer reconnaissance area (BE, AM and AL) seven locations of British vessels were observed.

One of our submarines sighted one destroyer in BE 1326 at 0910, course southwest. At 1425 our air reconnaissance sighted one aircraft carrier in 46 degrees 40' N 19 degrees 30' W, one cruiser, course southwest, speed 17 knots. At 1620 the formation was in BE 5722.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the BERNAU:

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla consisting of six boats left the Gironde at 0600, and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla likewise with six boats left Brest at 0500 as planned.

At 0225 Group West reported that the BERNAU had been sighted by our air reconnaissance on 22 Dec. at 1300 in BD 6666, course 0 degrees. The ship did not answer several calls and recognition signals, and was recognized by her characteristic appearance.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed Group West that the conduct of the BERNAU had been correct. Call-up as well as answer may compromise the ship as long as she is sailing on enemy courses. Therefore the exchange of recognition signals is allowed only for special occasions, such as calling for assistance should the ship make contact with the enemy.

At 0930 the Group informed Operations Division, Naval Staff of the radiogram to the BERNAU, stating that He 177's were to be expected on 23 Dec. and that the BERNAU had been sighted in BD 6666 by our air reconnaissance at 1300 on 22 Dec.

With regard to this radiogram Operations Division, Naval Staff replied to Group West:

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"1. Since the He 177 is a bomber plane, it is able to help ships in difficult situations. Captains are not to scuttle ships immediately on coming into contact with the enemy, but only when the situation is hopeless and help from an He 177 is no longer to be expected. It is necessary that ships be informed of this.

2. The message to the BERNAU concerning the sighting on 22 Dec. at 1300 was sent to the radio station at 0930 on 23 Dec. The delay is too great. Ships are to be informed of everything as soon as possible."

The appearance of the carrier group sighted at 1425, evidently the same that was located the previous day, created a serious situation. In the noon hours this group and the BERNAU were in position 19 degrees 30 feet West, only about 30 miles apart. The danger of the blockade runner being detected was great. Group West informed her at 1540 of the group consisting of one cruiser and one aircraft carrier on southwest course, which was sighted at 1425 in BE 5494, without any comment.

The BERNAU was actually sighted by a carrier-borne plane, which caused the ship to send out the following short signal at 1528:

"Am being shadowed by a carrier-borne plane".

Further corrput code groups were later interpreted as position report 47 degrees 20' North, at 1930 and were correspondingly confirmed by Group West.

At 1750 Group West informed the BERNAU of the enemy's position at 1620 according to our reconnaissance report and transmitted the order issued by Operations Division, Naval Staff, regarding the possibilities of support from He 177's as far as 22 degrees West.

Surveillance of enemy radio traffic in the course of the afternoon did not reveal any signs of a reaction following the meeting of the carrier-borne plane with the BERNAU. The ship evidently succeeded in deceiving the plane, as the carrier formation continued on its southwesterly course without paying attention to the sighting of the ship slightly to the north of its own position.

With the danger of a collision with the BERNAU past Submarine Division, Naval Staff reported its intention to advance Group "Borkum" on a course of 30 degrees as from 1900 roughly as far as the line BE 4730 - 5720, in order to intercept the carrier.

In the course of an exchange of teletypes between Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff and Chief of Operations Branch, Group West, beginning at 2100 it was suggested to Group that, in view of the tense situation during the afternoon, the captains of the BERNAU and the TRAVE should

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be informed personally, perhaps in the form of a short review of the situation, pointing out that operations by the enemy destroyers would be hampered owing to the bad weather, and to the arrival of our rendezvous forces and to our air operations. The measure is advisable in order to make them feel not too strictly bound to previous orders.

Weighed by similar considerations, Group West intended in the afternoon to suggest heading direct for the rendezvous at about 1600. Actually the BERNAU was not proceeding on southerly course as planned, but was heading direct for the rendezvous, as was gathered from the short signal.

Chief of Operations Branch, Group West then reported that the Air Forces operating on 24 Dec. would only be slight, as the Air Command Atlantic had sent out strong forces of He 177's against the carrier formation.

Group West purposely did not inform the BERNAU of her sighting by our air reconnaissance in a special radiogram, but intended to add it in the next radiogram. Certainly the delay of seven hours caused thereby was not intended.

During the exchange of teletypes Group West received a short signal from the 8th Destroyer Flotilla, according to which a plane was shadowing our formation in BF 8224. The Group included from it that the 8th Destroyer Flotilla was about 10 miles behind the scheduled position.

The Group could not determine whether the carrier and the cruiser were simply a search group hunting the blockade-runner or an escort group for a convoy; it was believed that the first assumption was the more probable. The Group hoped for support from the weather and was also of the opinion that the carrier-borne plane could be successfully deceived by the BERNAU in the afternoon. It expected that the rendezvous with the 8th Destroyer Flotilla would be delayed for some hours. For the time being the Group examined whether it would be practicable for the BERNAU to alter course in southeasterly direction.

At 2220 Group West informed Operations Division, Naval Staff of the radiogram to the BERNAU in which it expressed the assumption that the BERNAU was heading direct for the rendezvous point and that she would arrive there with only slight delay.

At 2358 Group West informed Operations Division, Naval Staff of the following radiogram to the BERNAU:

"1. It seems that the carrier borne plane did not recognize you. There are no signs of any enemy reaction to the sighting.

2. The enemy's speed and operational capacity is restricted by the storm. The storm is therefore very favorable to you.

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3. Strong air forces were sent out for your support on 24 Dec. He 177's are ready for action as bombers.

4. Owing to the storm our destroyers are likely to arrive at the rendezvous somewhat later."

For copy of all teletypes and reports relative to this operation see records "Bringing in of the blockade runners OSORNO and ALSTERUFER" in appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.

Atlantic Coast:

Two steamers totalling 4,700 BRT engaged in the Spanish ore traffic were escorted.

Channel Coast:

The patrol positions were not manned, No minesweeping activity on account of the heavy seas.

The convoy of the steamer IDA put into Boulogne at 0830, and left again at 1850 intending to proceed as far as the Hook.

The same convoy was subjected to enemy long-range artillery fire from 2011 on. The fire was returned from 2012 to 2127 by the batteries Todt, Lindemann and Naval Artillery Detachment 702, concentrating on Deal, Dover, and Folkestone with 32 rounds.

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla plans to lay the minefields N4 and N3 during the night of 23 Dec.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The convoy "473" left Den Helder at 1600 and continued its passage to the Hook. The convoy "1201" Hook-Elbe consisting of four steamers put into Den Helder at 1500.

Six convoys totalling 70,286 BRT were carried out in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

At 1125 our air reconnaissance reported a convoy consisting of 17 steamers, 3 tankers, 3-4 cruisers, 9 destroyers and corvettes in AF 1578, on course 30 degrees. Additional reports lead us to believe that the number of the reported cruisers is higher. The Naval Staff supposes it to be the same convoy which was reported at 1045 in AE 69 consisting of about 40 ships, and regards it as a PQ convoy which is follow-

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ing an inshore route as it was observed to do during previous winters. Perhaps the coastal route also indicates that the enemy recognizes the weakness of our naval and air forces. Should the presence of the transports reported in the first observation be confirmed and should further heavy naval units be reported in the vicinity, then a raid on the Norwegian coast is also possible.

At 1214 a cruiser and five destroyers were sighted in AF 1298, It is possible that this is an additional escort group for the convoy.

Group North/Fleet considers the following as possible intentions of the enemy:

a. PQ convoy

b. Raid on the Norwegian coast or diversionary operation. The composition of the convoy and the season make a raid or a landing operation improbable.

c. Other unknown intentions, as for instance to lure out the Task Force, in order to engage it in battle with a covering group not yet detected. It is most likely to be a PQ convoy. The course of 90 degrees observed last may be a dummy course or a leg.

The presence of a covering group, very particularly in the area north and northwest of the convy, is to be expected at the latest at the time when the convoy is approaching Bear Island, since here the air reconnaissance is thinner than in the South. According to previous experiences the distance of the covering group from the convoy must be assumed to be up to 300 miles.

At 0021 Group North/Fleet reported that the first reconnaissance report on the assumed presence of troop transports in the vicinity of the PQ convoy was not confirmed.

In the noon hours calm and clear weather with ten tenths cloud and cloud ceiling 1,000 m was reported in the area of the convoy.

Own Situation:

Operations against the P.Q. convoy:

At 0021 Group North reported its intention to concentrate all submarines for the time being in the Bear Straits. On the evening of 23 Dec. two submarines will leave Drontheim and Narvik, and a further one Hammerfest. Commander, Submarines, Norway intends to transfer the operational areas to AB 3789 - AB 6895 with eight submarines at 2000, and to narrow the operational area after that on the basis of the results of further air reconnaissance. Two new submarines transferred to the south

will be in position by 1800 on 24 Dec.

The Group also asked that basic consent for the engagement of the Task Force be given in advance, thereby enabling the Group to decide independently, should, for instance, communications break down.

Naval Staff did not consider that at the time there were sufficient grounds for granting this basic consent.

According to reports from the 5th Air Force via Group North/Fleet, the Commander in Chief, Air Force refused to transfer forces to operate against the PQ convoy. The 5th Air Force had no suitable forces to operate, and considered further reconnaissance in the convoy area on the same scale an unnecessary waste of personnel and material, unless the Navy intended to take action; Group North/Fleet was asked for information with regard to its intentions.

Group North replied to the 5th Air Force as follows:

"Continuous reconnaissance, if possible keeping contact with the convoy, and extensive reconnaissance in the area of the convoy route is urgently required for the effective engagement of naval forces.

At present all the submarines which Commander, Submarines, Norway has at his disposal are operating against the convoy. Until the submarines have contacted the enemy it is necessary that the convoy is constantly shadowed from the air.

The operation of the Task Force with all surface forces available is intended as soon as such an operation promises to be successful and the situation is favorable. For this it is necessary that in addition to remaining in contact with the enemy extensive reconnaissance is also carried out for the detection of a possible covering group.

If there are prospects of success naval forces will operate against the convoy even if the Air Forces does not carry out combat operations, which is only to be expected in view of the strained situation and the non-arrival of reinforcements!"

A discussion between Chief of Staff, Naval Staff and the Chief, Air Force General Staff revealed that a transfer of combat forces to the Norwegian area was impossible.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Chief, Naval Staff through Commander, Submarines West by teletype of the situation as regards air reconnaissance and operational engagement of the Air Force. In addition to this Operations Division, Naval Staff acquainted Chief, Naval Staff with the enemy situation and Group North/Fleet's request for basic consent to the engagement of the Task Force, and announced a further review of the situation for the evening.

Operations Division, Naval Staff also informed Admiral, Fuehrer Headquarters, Armed Forces High Command, Operations

Staff, Navy and the Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Army High Command of the review on the situation from Group North/Fleet, approved by Operations Division, Naval Staff, stating that Chief, Naval Staff reserved unrestricted right to act as he considered fit.

The intentions of the Group are summed up as follows:

a. All submarines, eight in number, will be concentrated in a patrol line southwest of Bear Island. If the Air Force remains securely in contact with the enemy it is intended to advance the patrol line southwestwards. If the contact is lost, the submarines must be withdrawn to the Bear Straits in time to intercept the convoy before it can pass through.

b. The Task Force would only operate when the convoy enters the area of the Bear Straits; assuming the convoy's speed to be 10 knots and reckoning with the shortest route this will not happen until the morning of 25 Dec. at the earliest. This would be the most favorable point at which to operate in view of the area and the probability of our submarines making contact with the enemy. The condition is that the relative strength of the forces determined by the reconnaissance promises a successful operation. For this it is of special importance that extensive and continuous reconnaissance gives positive knowledge of the composition of the escort forces, including the absence or otherwise of a covering group not detected until now.

This review of the situation by Group North was sent direct to the Commander in Chief, Navy with Commander, Submarines, West.

For copies of all further teletypes etc. concerning operation against the PQ convoy see operation "SCHARNHORST" in appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIs.

Remaining Situation:

At 1905 on 22 Dec. one of our eastbound convoys was attacked by five Russian PT boats off Vardoe. Three of the attacking boats were destroyed, the others were probably damaged. All torpedoes missed their targets. Material damage and losses caused were slight. Five Russian prisoners were taken.

Thirty one ships were escorted to the north and 38 to the south. Owing to the lack of escorts 22 ships remained in harbor.

The barrage NQ 73, requested by the Naval Command, Norway for the protection of the Fjord entrance to Namsos which is not protected by artillery, was approved by Operations Division, Naval Staff. Seventy six UMB mines were allocated in accordance with the request.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

The BEITZEN left Kristiansand South in an easterly direction and is heading for home waters. At 2100 on 22 Dec. the mine-sweeper M "545" was damaged in Copenhagen by magnetic mine.

The boat is listing but is still afloat. ZK "32" of the 8th Escort Flotilla which was lying alongside, has sunk.

For details see Telegram 1051.

One mine was cleared in Danzig Bay. The bay was partly closed because of the suspicion of mines.

As the Skagerrak barrages have been without anti-sweeping devices until now, Naval Command, Baltic was ordered by Operations Division, Naval Staff to submit proposals for laying out EMB and RB mines at an early date.

V. Submarine Warfare.

Group "Borkum" was ordered to proceed on course 30 degrees with maximum speed after surfacing at 1900, in order to attack the aircraft carrier and cruiser detected in BE 5483 at 1425.

In the dawn of 23 Dec. the submarine U "471" torpedoed a freighter of 8,000 BRT from out a fast westbound convoy consisting of 6 -8 large steamers, 1 cruiser and 6 destroyers during a submerged attack in AL 0164. The boat was prevented from remaining in contact with the enemy by planes and was damaged.

The submarine U "653" reported a "Zaunkoenig" miss on a frigate in BE 1329.

There are no special reports from the other operational areas in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

VI. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

During the day planes were reported approaching the Dutch coast; fairly strong forces carried out an attack on an airfield. Building sites and traffic installations in Belgium and northern France were subjected to attacks.

2. German Reich Territory:

Nothing to report.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

In the area of the 2nd Air Force the 2nd Air Force the enemy attacked Ventimiglia and Imperia. In addition to this

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attacks were carried out in southern France, among others another on the viaduct at Antheor. Owing to the small amount of forces engaged, no enemy planes were shot down.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast, minor enemy forces carried out attacks on harbor in the Peloponnese and in Naxos. Naval anti-aircraft artillery shot down one plane.

There are no special reports on our own operations.

4. Eastern Front:

For 5th Air Force operations see Situation, Northern Waters. Otherwise nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence a convoy was in the area of Bone in the evening.

At 1031 90-100 ships, totalling about 600 - 700,000 BRT, mostly Liberty freighters were sighted on course 90 degrees, 50 miles east-northeast of Algiers. Close by there were 4 freighters, 4 tankers and 4 destroyers.

No special shipping movements were observed in the Gibraltar area.

Own Situation:

Two steamers totalling 6,250 BRT were escorted off the south coast of France.

The viaduct of Antheor remained unharmed by the enemy air raid.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Torpedo boats TA "23" and "24" and the minelayer NIEDERSACHSEN carried out the minelaying operation "Attacke" off the northern tip of Corsica according to plan. Three motor minesweepers formed a remote escort.

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It is reported in addition that during the night of 15 Dec. an auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by two enemy destroyers south of Civitanova.

The first two motor minesweepers arrived in Venice after transfer over land.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

According to a report from the commander of the NIOBE, the ship broke in two; both parts are lying fast on the rocks. The commander and 20 men remained aboard the ship to guard it and dismantle the artillery. The medical officer and the chief engineer were among the 17 men killed.

Intensified partisan activity by raids on railroads, motor vehicles, roads and communication lines was reported in the area of Istria.

Sabotage is suspected to have taken place on board the steamer ADRIATICO laden with 1,000 life vests for operation "Herbstgewitter". An investigation is in the progress. The steamer is drifting south-southwest of Fiume with engine trouble and will have to be towed in.

At noon on 22 Dec. the town of Curzola was taken in spite of enemy resistance. The troops are advancing towards the southwest.

Owing to unfavorable weather conditions the projected operation by two PT boats from Cattaro against partisan shipping during the night of 23 Dec. is impossible.

b. Aegean Sea:

A sailing vessel laden with fuel was destroyed at noon on 22 Dec. during an enemy air attack on Cerigo.

Torpedo boat TA "15", motor minesweeper R "211" and PT boat S "54" transferred from Piraeus to Mudros.

At 1030 after leaving Mudros the steamer BALKAN was sunk by an enemy submarine which had recently been subjected to a depth charge hunt. Torpedo boat TA "15", motor minesweeper R "211" and PT boat S "54" proceeded to Salonica after taking the survivors on board. A minesweeping plane cleared four mines in Suda Bay, two further mines were cleared by mine clearance group off Chalkis; thus a total of nine mines was cleared.

The netlayer PIRAEUS carried out its task off Monemvasia. The craft was slightly damaged during a low-level attack by four planes, the personnel suffered casualties. One

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of the attacking planes was shot down.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence the destroyer "G" is probably in the port of Tuapse.

Own Situation:

The PT boats did not contact the enemy during operations on the night of 22 Dec.

The hunt for the enemy submarine southeast of Tarchankutsk is being continued. Her destruction is probable.

Minesweeping activity in the area of Sevastopol and off Tarchankutsk remained without success.

A 150 ton-crane ran aground during the transfer from Nikolajev to Odessa as a result of enemy artillery fire.

Convoy duty was partly hindered owing to fog.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

On 21 Dec. Japanese naval air forces attacked enemy supply ships off Cape Mark8s (New Pomerania) and sank two cruisers, two large transports, six transports of a special type and various smaller craft. The transports were attacked before the disembarkation and unloading of the troops and equipment.

According to an Allied report U. S. planes sank two Japanese freighters of 6-8,000 tons and damaged two further freighters of the same size off New-Mecklenburg.

The following official Japanese report was received from Bangkok:

The operational strength of the enemy air forces in the New Guinea - Salomon area is reckoned to be 2,000 planes. Owing to the engagement of new Japanese fighters the number of enemy planes shot down was raised to 30% of the attacking planes.

The Japanese naval air force is concentrating mainly on the enemy naval forces, while the Army air force is concentrating on the enemy air base in New Guinea. In many cases one aerial torpedo is sufficient to sink one of the auxiliary aircraft carriers which have been converted from merchant ships.

Part of the U. S. air forces hitherto stationed in India were transferred to China. Chinese pilots are being instructed by Americans, partly in America. The intensified engagement of American air forces in China since mid-November has interfered with Japanese shipping off the south coast of China considerably and air forces are organized as follows:

1. Chief Command" Chief of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Nimitz.

2. Subordinate to him

a. Commander in Chief, Central Pacific, Rear Admiral Spruance,

b. Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific, Rear Admiral Halse,

3. To each of these commanders are subordinate:

a. Chief, Naval Forces for Special Tasks (task forces)

b. Chief, Additional Naval and Army Air Forces

c. Chief, Landing Assault Forces

d. Chief, Landing Forces

4. The bulk of the command lies with the Navy. The Chiefs 3 a to c. are naval officers.

5. The task of the landing assault forces in accordance with 3 c. consists of the formation of beachheads for the protection of the disembarkation of forces 3 d. They are a mixture of naval and land forces and are equipped with fast transports, light escorts, special landing craft, amphibian tanks, and combined operations- and flame-throwing troops.

6. Army air forces and landing forces according to 3 b. and d. for offensive operations will be detached from the Command of Chief of the Pacific Army, Lt. Gen. Richardson, in Hawaii.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. According to a report by telephone from the Naval Liaison Officer with the High Command, Army General Staff on 23 Dec. the question of supplies to the Crimea was not even discussed between the Operations Division and the Quartermaster General. For the time being it was reported only that in mid-Janurry increased demands on sea transport, in one way or another, were to be expected. The Navy was asked to hold itself in readiness.

Operations Division, Naval Staff informed Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, asking them to inform the authorities concerned so that arrangements regarding the dockyard periods of the naval forces and transport craft could, if possible, be harmonized with it.

II. On 21 Dec. a discussion took place between the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff and Rear Admiral Abe on the Timor question and the general war situation.

For copy as per 1/Skl I k 3795/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV. The Navy is interested in the Japanese gesture for reconciliation since the Navy would be the first to be affected by the consequences of a war between Japan and Portugal.

III. By order of the Fuehrer, the conclusions drawn from previous experiences of combat with Anglo-Americans were issued on 12 Dec. as a guide to the Armed Forces High Command in the preparations for the imminent large-scale fighting in the West.

Operations Division, Naval Staff sent a copy to the chief Naval Commands concerned.

For copy of the order 1/Skl 42246/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.

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IV. General Korten stated in a personal reply to the teletype from the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff (see War Diary 22 Dec.) that the Commander, Naval Air Training, Baltic has been strictly instructed to comply with the naval demands immediately, since he had both the forces and aircraft with which to do this. (See Telegam 1808).

V. The Commander in Chief, Navy issued the following Order of the Day to the Navy:

"On the fifth Christmas of the war the German soldier on all fronts and at home is engaged in a hard fight for the maintenance and future of Greater Germany. At this time I send my best and warmest greetings to all members of the Navy. I think particularly of the men on the high seas at grips with the enemy. Their courage, their tenacity and their loyalty give an example to us all. I wish them a merry Christmas and a safe return after victorious patrol. Salute to our Fuehrer!"

Situation 24 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Operations Division, Naval Staff sent the weather report for 24 Dec. and the forecast for 25 Dec. to the ALSTERUFER by Radiogram 1819. The forecast provides post-depression weather with good visibility, wind from west to northwest, strength 6-8. After a temporary lull a new zone of bad weather with winds freshening from the southwest, rain and bad visibility will follow after midday. The blockade-runners RIO GRANDE, WESERLAND and BURGENLAND received sailing orders by radiogram from Operations Division. For copy as per 1/Skl I k 4015, 4016, 4014/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

In these orders the ships are instructed to sail slightly east of the line La Plata - Freetown. All three ships were instructed to keep a special look out for air forces.

II. Situation West Area.I. Enemy Situation:

Great activity by 84 planes as well as four crash planes was observed over the outer Bay of Biscay. Numerous sighting reports and reports from planes maintaining contact with the enemy revealed that the enemy had detected the 8th Destroyer Flotilla and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla as well as the BERNAU. At 0026 a plane reported five of our destroyers in 48 degrees N 25 degrees W, course west, speed 18 knots, and subsequently seven unknown craft in the same position. At 0620 a plane reported five vessels in BF 4991. It received an urgent enciphered radiogram 0638. At 0710 two further planes received a similar radiogram from Plymouth. Another plane reported two destroyers in BF 8481 on course 181 degrees, speed 18 knots without mentioning the time. At 1109 a plane reported contacting nine destroyers in BF 4787 and at 1115 eleven destroyers in about the same position. At 1140 eleven destroyers were reported in BF 4782, course west.

These reports reveal that the passage of the two flotillas both before and after their rendezvous was detected exactly.

At 1225 a plane reported a merchant ship in BF 4775, course east, speed 12 knots, and sent an SOS at 1237, probably after having been fired on by the BERNAU or by our air forces. A further aerial combat was reported at 1320 in BE 939333.

At 1300 a plane reported seven merchant ships and five destroyers in BF 4747, course east. At 1338 eight further planes were sent out, probably against our formation. This formation was reported at 1434 as consisting of twelve vessels in position 44 degrees 42' N 11 degrees 13' W, course east, speed 16 knots. Also at 1540 the formation, consisting of 12 merchant ships and destroyers, was reported in BF 7115, this time with a speed of 20 knots. An exact report on the composition of the formation was therefore not intercepted.

Six locations of British vessels were observed in the outer reconnaissance area.

At 0049 one of our submarines detected an aircraft carrier in BE 7325. This report from the Commanding Admiral, Submarines was transmitted to Group West at 0155. A cruiser and a destroyer were reported in the same area on southwesterly course, the same as the aircraft carrier.

2. Own Situation:Bringing in of the BERNAU:

At 0143 Group West informed the BERNAU of the sighting of an enemy aircraft carrier on southwesterly course by

one of our submarines, suggesting she was the same aircraft as reported at 1425 on 23 Dec. At 1002 Group West sent another message informing the BERNAU that a cruiser and a destroyer had been sighted in the same area on a southwesterly course, and added that on this account the enemy was not operating against the BERNAU.

Group West also informed the BERNAU of the observations made by the enemy air reconnaissance, from which the Group concluded that the BERNAU would arrive at the rendezvous at about 1400.

At 0005 Group West reported:

1. The Group does not intend to alter the course of the OSORNO. An easterly course would mean a slight gain in ground, and also bring the formation nearer to the exit to the western Channel.

2. At 2058 on 23 Dec. the 8th Destroyer Flotilla reported a plane shadowing the formation in BF 8224 at 2138:

Separation of the flotilla in order to throw off the enemy, speed 17 knots barrage fire.

The Group gathered from the enemy radio traffic that the destroyer formation had now been recognized as such.

3. The weather was becoming worse. In the area of the rendezvous the force of the north wind was 11 on the afternoon of 23 Dec., a velocity of at least 7 from north-northwest was expected for 24 Dec. Thus under the most favorable circumstances a rendezvous would be possible at noon on 24 Dec. but probably not until later.

4. Eight bombers, including six He 177's would take off at dawn on 24 Dec. On this account there would be no more bomber forces available in the area of operations and no reserves for combat engagement from about 1500 on. In addition to this ten Ju 88's would take off in the morning and ten in the afternoon.

At 1011 Naval Group West reported at 0727 the 8th Destroyer Flotilla turned on to a northerly course in BF 7216 in order to deceive the enemy planes which were shadowing the formation. Position by dead reckoning at 1200 was BF 4540. The Group supposed that the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was not detected by the enemy, that it was proceeding on westerly course in the direction of the rendezvous, and that the BERNAU was proceeding on her course as planned.

At 0900 the destroyer Z "23" was proceeding on course east in BF 8451. Owing to damage caused by the weather the destroyer had been detached. At 1246 the 8th Destroyer Flotilla reported rendezvous with the BERNAU in BE 9322.

At 1656 the 8th Destroyer Flotilla reported an enemy air attack in BF 7126 and at 1740:

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"So far everything in order". At 1650 Group West reported that since the rendezvous with the BERNAU there had been no further reports from the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla, but that according to radio intelligence enemy planes were continuously shadowing the formation, but seemed to be uncertain about its composition. No operational radiograms from the enemy were intercepted.

The destroyer Z "23" is expected to arrive at point "Rose" at 2100. An attempt will be made to escort her in with minesweepers.

According to a report from the Commanding Admiral, Submarines, two boats of Group "Borkum" each sank a destroyer out of the aircraft carrier formation. In addition to this a triple-miss was fired at the carrier in BE 7343.

According to further reports from Group West the torpedo boat T "27" which was on return passage because of severe rudder damage, was behind the formation at 1906 with T "22", and at 2245 drifted out of control in BF 7253.

The enemy planes continued to shadow the formation after nightfall. The available Ju 88's stood at immediate readiness on call. According to a report from the Air Commander, Atlantic Coast armed reconnaissance by six He 177's in the western Bay of Biscay brought no contact with enemy naval forces. One He 177 was shot down by an enemy plane. Also the 22 Ju 88's as well as three fighter thrusts of altogether 16 FW 190's sent out for the protection of our naval forces made no contact with the enemy.

Atlantic Coast:

One mine was cleared off Brest on 23 Dec. On 24 Dec. the patrol and minesweeping service was carried out as planned.

On 21 Dec. Naval Group West reported that after the sinking of the PIETRO ORSEOLO drifting loading goods, especially torpedoes, were picked up or blown up, and asked whether there was any gear on board which had to be kept particularly secret.

To this the Special Staff for War against Merchant Shipping, Armed Forces High Command reported that boxes with secret marks and code instructions as well as those containing instruments and other gear must be secured against capture by the enemy. It was therefore necessary to guard the wreck and keep a look out for drifting boxes. Further measures would be taken by the Naval Special Staff, Bordeaux and Group West direct.

Channel Coast:

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla carried out the minelaying operation as planned.

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A torpedo operation by the 5th PT Boat Flotilla in the area off the Needles and Portland Bill was unsuccessful. The flotilla put into Cherbourg. The boats were driven off by destroyers. Star-shell fire from automatic guns (6 rounds) as well as 8-10 fans with 4 cm-star-shells were observed for the first time.

During the night of 23 Dec. commencing at 2000 the convoy of the steamer IDA was subjected to uninterrupted long-range fire from Cape Gris Nez on. Shortly after the end of the long-range fire off Calais the commander of minesweeper M "402" reported that the boat struck a mine, while other boats maintained a stick of bombs had been released by a fighter-bomber. The boat was taken in tow by minesweeper M "412". Shortly afterwards enemy PT boats commenced an attack with air support. One PT boat broke into pieces under our fire, a second one caught fire. The PT boats returned the gunfire and scored numerous hits on the IDA and on the minesweepers. The attacks continued until nearly as far as Dunkirk. On account of navigation difficulties after the failure of the de-gaussing gear and compass aboard the IDA, the Commander of the 24th Minesweeper Flotilla ordered the convoy to put into Dunkirk. The casualties to the personnel of the convoy were only slight. For preliminary report see Telegram 0245. For combat report by the Commander of the 2nd Motor Minesweeper Flotilla see Telegram 1115.

This flotilla reported slight damage to four of our boats and hits and damage to two enemy boats.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

In the morning and forenoon hours enemy planes were fired on by naval anti-aircraft artillery in the Dutch coastal area. Enemy planes returning from the raid on Berlin in the morning hours approached the Heligoland Bight and were subjected to fire from the naval anti-aircraft artillery in Wesermuende. Late in the afternoon several planes were reported over the shipping channels between Ameland and Nord-erney, probably engaged dropping mines; they were also fired on by naval anti-aircraft artillery.

The convoy "473" put into the Hook. The convoy "1201" Hool - Elbe was carried out as planned.

The convoy "474" Elbe - Hook consisting of three steamers put out from the Elbe at 1145 but returned because of heavy sea.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

The PQ convoy reported on 23 Dec. was again detected

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by our air reconnaissance and was in AB 84 at 1220, course 50 degrees, speed 8 knots.

There was further reports on the sighting of this convoy transmitted at 1330, 1500 and 1610. The plane reports do not make it clear whether the convoy has separated into two groups or whether there are differences in bearings.

A British vessel was detected in AF 1220 at 1829.

Ten planes were located operating over the North Sea.

Own Situation:

Operations against the PQ convoy:

Admiral, Northern Waters reported that the Task Force was still at 3-hours' notice. The submarine patrol line was transferred to AB 3789-6895. The 5th Air Force sent out two Ju 88's and four PQ 200's to maintain contact with the PQ convoy.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff informed the Chief, Naval Staff of the situation and referred to the War Diary of the Deputy Commanding Admiral, Task Force received on 23 Dec., in which operational possibilities for the Task Force, even with the present composition are clearly and methodically set out. The ideas are roughly as follows

During the winter it is best to operate destroyers alone, if there are sufficient numbers. Backing by heavy units is always desirable. The available five destroyers are not sufficient. The missing number cannot be replaced by the SCHARNHORST, the more so as this ship herself is dependent on protection during the Polar night. Nevertheless her engagement in support of the destroyers is necessary and opportunity for her intervention will certainly arise. Commanding Admiral, Task Force thinks as follows:

a. Presumably the enemy cruiser group is keeping at a distance because of the danger from submarines and will close up only in case of alarm.

b. Despite our inadequate air reconnaissance we may hope that it will succeed in detecting the convoy in time. For this it is of particular importance, too, that contact is maintained by submarines, whose presence will at the same time tie down the destroyers.

c. During the darkness the SCHARNHORST with two destroyers will proceed at a distance and not attack until dawn is approaching. Until then the shadowing destroyers, who are also to exploit any opportunity to attack, will have got full details of the situation for the SCHARNHORST.

d. Six hours of bright twilight will give the SCHARNHORST

opportunity to attack. A repetition on the following day is dependent on the fuel supply of the destroyers, which cannot be re-fuelled by the SCHARNHORST during the night.

e. In case of the appearance of enemy battleships the SCHARNHORST must break off the operation. It is possible that during the withdrawal there would still be opportunities for the destroyers to attack.

f. The importance of capturing ships, mainly tankers, is acknowledged, but the prospects, however, are poor.

g. Commanding Admiral, Task Force concludes:

"The experiences of this naval war, which has often placed our forces in a favorable situation despite their weakness, gives up the right to hope that now too luck may be on our side."

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff supports the above considerations.

At 1800, Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Chief, Naval Staff of the position of the PQ convoy at 1220, stating that the 5th Air Force will do everything in its power to help, not only because it is demanded by the Navy, but in the clear knowledge of what is at stake.

Shortly before midnight Group North/Fleet submitted the following review of the situation and proposal:

The 5th Air Force has promised continuous reconnaissance and maintenance of contact with the convoy, constant but not complete reconnaissance against the covering group up to a distance of one day's run around the convoy, probing reconnaissance as far as the east coast of Scotland and of the area between the Shetland Islands and Jan Mayen, close escort for our departing naval forces as far as the light allows, but no bomber operations. According to dead reckoning the convoy will be about north of North Cape on the morning of 26 Dec., this being the most favorable point for operations by our surface forces. If the operation proceeds as planned, the submarines should contact the enemy at 0800 on 25 Dec. According to the day's reconnaissance the convoy consists of 17 merchant ships and three tankers escorted by three cruisers, five destroyers, and four patrol vessels. The presence of further escort forces is to be expected. If the air reconnaissance does not observe any particularly strong escort forces near the convoy and considering the fact that the presence of a covering group has not yet been confirmed, Group North/Fleet suggests the following operation for the Task Force: Commanding Admiral, Task Force with the SCHARNHORST and destroyers to leave on 25 Dec. so as to intercept the convoy as it begins to dawn about 1000 on 26 Dec.

A joint attack by all forces will be carried out only if the conditions for a battle (weather, visibility and clarity

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concerning enemy situation) are favorable. This is not likely to occur. If tactical conditions are not favorable for an operation of the SCHARNHORST, only the destroyers will operate against the convoy. The battleship is to be withdrawn in advance from the probable battle area to a covering position in the vicinity of the Polar coast, or if necessary to a waiting position in the outer Fjord area, depending on the decision of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force. According to the circumstances a new operation can be carried out the following day, either by the whole Task Force or by the destroyers only. The Group refers to the Operational Order, Eastern Front of 1 May 1943.

Admiral, Northern Waters has already taken the security measures necessary for the engagement of the whole Task Force.

In a final review the Group reports:

It will probably only be possible for the SCHARNHORST to use her guns for about two hours around twilight. In the presumable operational area this will be from 1122 to 1207. It is doubtful whether during that time it will be possible to break through the screen and reach the convoy. Danger of torpedoes. During the phase the destroyers will surround the SCHARNHORST in close escort.

On the whole the prospects of a major success are slight. The risk is great.

Successes could only be scored by the destroyers; they are, however, uncertain and involve great risk if there is a strong enemy escort and the enemy location and firing is good. The Commander of the flotilla must break off the attack on his own initiative if on reaching the convoy he finds that prospects of success against the convoy or the escort forces are hopeless. If a covering group with heavy units or a carrier is reported within fighting range the Commanding Admiral, Task Force is to break off the entire operation.

A decision regarding the operation is requested by noon on 25 Dec., or at least permission to put out, since a withdrawal on account of a changed situation is possible at any time.

Admiral, Northern Waters and the Task Force received orders to prepare for all the above-mentioned eventualities. Commencing 1300 on 25 Dec., the Task Force will be at 1 hour's notice.

The Chief, Naval Staff interrupted his journey to the Atlantic Coast on account of the development of the situation in the northern area and remained in Paris with Group West. The above review on the situation by Group North was sent direct to the Chief, Naval Staff in Paris.

In the course of several discussions by telephone with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff the Commanding Admiral, Group North/

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Fleet expressed his own decided attitude towards this operation.

Remaining Situation:

At 1330 on 23 Dec. the tanker BROMBERG ran aground in the Oslo Fjord. Salvage operations are in progress.

Twenty eight ships were escorted to the north and 35 ships to the south. Owing to the lack of escorts 30 ships remained in harbor.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

V. Submarine Warfare.

In the course of the operation against the carrier formation in BE the submarine U "305" belonging to Group "Borkum" sighted the carrier in BE 7325 at 0049, course southwest, and reported later that it was driven off by a cruiser. At 0403 submarine U "667" reported a hydrophone bearing from BE 7266 on southwest course at high speed. At 0118 submarine U "415" reported a triple miss on the carrier which turned sharply away, and at 0143 the same boat reported a hit by a Zaunkoenig torpedo on a destroyer and definite sounds of sinking.

At 0505 the submarine U "275" reported a hit by a Zaunkoenig torpedo on one of two destroyers detected in BE 7343 and sounds of sinking after 38 minutes.

Group "Borkum" expects a southbound KMS convoy in the patrol line from BE 7128 to 7339 from the morning of 24 Dec. onwards. At 2056 the submarine U "415" sank a further eastbound destroyer, probably from the search group, by Zaunkoenig torpedo in BE 7321 after sounds of sinking. At 2100 the submarine U "275" was attacked by a destroyer in BE 7317

Submarine U "382" belonging to Group "Borkum" also reported the sinking of a further destroyer in BE at 0520 on 24 Dec.

In all four destroyers were sunk during one day in this operation by Group "Borkum".

The submarine U "515" reported a further Christmas success from the Gulf of Guinea where it sank a passenger freighter on 24 Dec. of the Madura class (9,032 BRT) from a small convoy.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

During an operation by six He 177's in the outer Bay

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of Biscay one He 177 was shot down in an attack by four Beaufighters.

By day strong formations with fighter escort attacked air force building sites in Belgium and northern France. On the whole the damage caused was not severe. Airfields were attacked in western France. No defensive successes on our side were reported.

2. German Reich Territory:

From 0100 strong formations crossed the area of Frankfurt - on - Main - Erfurt - Leipzig for an attack on Greater Berlin. Diversionary attacks by Mosquito forces were carried out in western Germany, on Aachen and Duisburg. The attack on Berlin was concentrated on the southeast and east of the city. Heavy damage was caused. For details see Daily Situation. Two hundred and forty four fighters which went up in defense shot down 15 enemy planes for certain and probably four further planes, with fifteen losses to themselves.

3. Mediterranean Area:

There was only slight air activity over the front area in Italy. Minor attacks were directed against marshalling yards south of Livorno.

In the area of Air Force Command, South some bombs were dropped near Kythira, where one auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk. Over the Aegean 16 planes were reported by day, and three by night carrying out reconnaissance.

4. Eastern Front:

The 5th Air Force sent out 36 planes on reconnaissance.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

Twenty-three freighters and one transport passed through the Straits of Gibraltar in westerly direction. Eighteen freighters and two corvettes left Gibraltar in the same direction. Ten transports, one CAIRO class cruiser and nine destroyers from the Atlantic put into Gibraltar. On 23 Dec. one CAIRO class cruiser and on 24 Dec. nine freighters, all from the Mediterranean, put into Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

Two convoys totalling 13,300 BRT were carried out off the south coast of France.

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At 1130 enemy submarines attacked a naval landing craft with 2 torpedoes off Cape Camaret without success. It was unsuccessfully hunted with depth charges.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

No further observations were made of the large east-bound convoy reported on 23 Dec. between Algiers and Bougie.

According to radio intelligence eight ships on unknown course were in the area south of Salerno on the afternoon of 23 Dec. At 0845 on 23 Dec. air reconnaissance sighted two tankers northwest of Trapani, course west, as well as 15 merchantmen and two escorts northeast of Ponta Alice, heading for Tarent, no time given.

Own Situation:

At 1320 on 23 Dec. two naval landing craft unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine off Sestri Levante.

At 0125 on 24 Dec. patrol boats off Rapallo made contact with two enemy PT boats, which withdrew when fired on.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

The operation "Herbstgewitter 2" was carried out as planned despite strong enemy resistance from time to time. The eastern part of Korcula has been cleared of partisans. Numerous weapons, ammunition and some small boats were captured. Five hundred enemy killed were counted. By the evening of 22 Dec. two of our craft were destroyed and a further one damaged.

The steamer DONATELLA was attacked in the harbor of Rogos-nitza by partisans and Badoglio troops who lay in ambush. An escorting patrol boat sank. The DONATELLA put into Sibenice at 1700 on 23 Dec.

The torpedo boats of foreign origin are still out of action. Torpedo boat TA "21" will probably be ready to sail on the evening of 24 Dec.

An auxiliary sailing vessel in the Bay of Zara sprang a leak due to bomb damage and was beached. Steamer LAGOSTA ran aground in the harbor of Zara.

Admiral, Adriatic sent a short report concerning the loss of the anti-aircraft cruiser NIOBE on 18 Dec. For copy see Telegram 2140.

b. Aegean Sea:

The torpedo boat TA "15", PT boat S "54" and the motor minesweeper R "211" put into Salonica at 2000 on 23 Dec. with 68 survivors of the steamer BALKAN.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The destroyer "G" probably left Tuapse on 23 Dec. in southeasterly direction.

Own Situation:

For the time being the salvage of the damaged 150 ton crane from Nikolajev which ran aground on the northern tip of Kinburn is impossible on account of strong enemy fire and on-shore breezes. West of Otchakov a gun carrier was heavily damaged by two direct hits.

An operation by the 1st PT Boat Flotilla with four boats against the enemy shipping off Cape Utrisch, and shelling of Anapa is planned for the night of 24 Dec. Three naval landing craft are operating in the southern part of the Straits of Kerch.

The escort service was partly hindered by fog.

Group South sends a report from Admiral, Black Sea, according to which there are at present 30 naval landing craft operational in the area of Admiral, Black Sea, four partially operational and 33 out of action, 19 of them in the Crimean harbors.

In most cases the damage is fairly severe, caused by the weather or enemy activity. Considering the further damage to be expected, the urgently necessary acceleration of repair work is only possible by means of an immediate reinforcement of personnel and equipment, particularly of the Naval Fitting-out Depot at Sevastopol, and by an adequate supply of spare parts by air transport. In this the Group asks for the support of the High Command, Navy.

Further action rests with the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, and the Naval Construction Division, Bureau of Naval Armament.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Naval Attache, Tokyo reported on 21 Dec.:

"The Americans which landed on 16 Dec. on New Pomerania, allegedly near Cape Marcus, are only a few thousand men strong, so that the Japanese consider this operation to be a diversionary maneuver. Nevertheless, this landing which immediately threatens Rabaul, and which was considered im-

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practicable after the heavy American losses, has caused visible excitement in the Naval Ministry. Junior officers quite openly showed their ill-humor with the supreme command of the Navy, which did not know how to enforce its will against the short-sighted Army Command."

Items of Political Importance.

In an Intelligence report from a source regarded as suspicious and influenced by the enemy, the following points are worthy of attention:

"Soviet circles report on the Moscow Conference that Molotov is unshakable in his insistence on the rigidity of Russian policy in East Asia in spite of Hull's attempts to secure at least the acceptance of a joint Allied Commission in East Asia."

"The Red Army is said to have demanded of Stalin two million fully trained and equipped men for the execution of the winter- and spring offensive, in order to reach the Balkan target. The impossibility of meeting this demand was the main reason for Russia's participation in the Teheran Conference, where in addition to the establishment of a second front in Europe, intensified supplies of war material were demanded and where the question of opening up new routes for bringing up supplies was discussed in connection with the Straits. The United States has already provided a great number of large transport planes of the "Douglas" type for quick transport between the Russian and Persian harbors and the railway-junctions in Russia."

In his Christmas message Roosevelt stated among other things, that General Eisenhower had been appointed Supreme Allied Commander in the European theatre.

In consideration of the developments in Northern Waters the Chief, Naval Staff decided to fly back to the Command headquarters "Bismarck", where he arrived in the afternoon.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff (1630)

I. Report from Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Div., Naval Staff on the situation regarding the bringing-in of the BERNAU, whose arrival off the Gironde may be expected in the course of the coming night. For details see Situation West Area.

The development of the situation as regards the PQ convoy which was again detected in the morning by our reconnaissance and at noon by the submarine position line was the subject of earnest discussion. The Chief, Naval Staff, the Chief of Staff and the Operations Division are of the opinion that now long-awaited opportunity for an offensive and successful operation by the Task Force has arrived, provided that the enemy situation does not take on any new or surprising change. Great emphasis should be laid on the fact that in the present situation the delivery of war material to Russia is of decisive importance. Now arises the opportunity for the Navy to contribute decisively to the relief of the tense situation on the eastern front.

For details of this operation see Situation Northern Waters: Operations against PQ convoy.

Special Items.

I. Operations Division, Naval Staff investigated the question of whether the destroyers stationed in the West Area should carry out their dockyard overhauls there or in home bases. The considerations were put down in a memorandum l/Skl I op. 42934/43 Gkdos. For copy see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.

The following decision was issued to Group North/Fleet, Group West, Commander, Destroyers, copy to Commanding Admiral, Task Force for the Group Commander under Commander, Destroyers:

A. I. The dockyard overhauls for destroyers are to be carried out in the west area as proposed by Group West.

2. Dockyard overhauls for torpedo boats in home bases.

B The reasons as reported in the communication from Operations Staff, Group West, Gkdos. 6321/A I and from Group North/Fleet Gkdos. 6329 M are acknowledged as regards the destroyers. In addition to the avoidance of the risk of a passage through the Channel, the necessity for establishment of efficient repair yards in the West Area is emphasized to provide against a time when a passage through the Channel might no longer be possible. The distribution of the destroyers as suggested in the letter from Commander, Destroyers 2838 C and which provides for the replacement of the boats detached for dockyard overhaul, is not in conformity with the intentions of the Naval Staff, and would render the increased number of destroyers in Northern Waters and the Skagerrak planned for the spring doubtful.

C. The objections to a transfer to home bases do not apply to torpedo boats.

II. The German Naval Command, Italy reports:

"There are at present among other vessels 20 torpedo boats, 19 corvettes and 37 minesweepers in the Italian dockyards, in addition to the vessels under construction which have been released for commissioning, and four destroyers, two of them being completed as radar-equipped vessels. Most of the material for these vessels as well as for numerous small, medium and large merchantmen of all kinds is available in the Italian area. There is, however, a shortage of crews, even for the remaining three boats of the 10th Torpedo Boat Flotilla. The German Naval Command asks for the decision of the Naval Staff as to whether in view of the strained material situation it was worthwhile to continue building, or whether the work-capacity and the material could be better employed in another

form of armament. The state of affairs at present in which completed craft are not immediately put into commission affects the morale of the workers, and in addition to this, it arouses the Italian desire for a fleet of their own.

The responsibility for further action in this matter rests with the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

III. Group South reports as follows with regard to the Italian midget submarines:

I. The boats have not yet been handed over.

2. On 7 Dec. the German General in Rome suggested to the Armed Forces High Command giving up the demand for the surrender of the Italian flotilla commander, as this could only be attained if great emphasis were laid on German prestige. The Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command replied on 11 Dec. that the Fuehrer agreed with this point of view. The release of the overpowered Fascist members of the crew was emphatically demanded; however, only one man was known as a Fascist, and he was released at once.

For details see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII.

IV. On 22 Dec. Admiral, Black Sea radioed to Group South:

"Army Group A has announced the evacuation of the Kherson bridgehead. This makes the restoration of the overland communications to the Crimea, which in the opinion of Admiral, Black Sea are indispensable for an adequate supply of the Crimea, very difficult, since now only the bridgehead of Nikopol can be used as a jumping-off position for the attack from the north. In addition to this the abandoning of the Kherson bridgehead means the loss of the railway bridge across the Dniepr near Aleschki, which has just been completed, and which is of decisive importance for the carrying out of supplies after the restoration of land communications.

The imminent freezing of the Sivash Sea and the resulting prolongation of the front without considerable reinforcements makes an adequate supply and reinforcement of the Crimea both imperative and urgent, if it is intended to hold the Crimea. If further Russian air forces are transferred to the area of the Nogaian Steppe, danger to the air traffic from Odessa to the Crimea is to be expected. Admiral, Black Sea asks for a basic decision or at least information on the intentions of the supreme command, so that the defense of the Crimea can be strengthened in every way possible and weakening by the withdrawal of personnel and material avoided.

To this, the Chief, Naval Staff issued the following directions, in order to record yet another statement on the situation:

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"It is still intended to hold the Crimea as long as it is at all possible. Owing to its great military and political importance the fact of its having held out so far has greatly influenced the general situation.

Thus the Crimea must continue in its attempt to hold out with every means in its power, in order to keep in line with the whole eastern front, which is fighting in accordance with the same strategic objective.

Thus as long as the Army is able to defend the Crimea the Navy must support the Army to the limits of its power."

For copy of the order 1/Skl I b 4017/43 Gkdos. Chefs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV a.

Situation 25 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The Naval Attache, Tokoyo reports that Admiral Yokoi in Singapore has handed over his duties to Admiral Kojima and arrived in Tokoyo on 20 Dec.

German passengers who travelled to Japan aboard the FLIEDER report that on account of the different mentality, the whole business of living together with the Japanese had not been at all easy and had demanded a great deal of give and take. For details see telegram reference 1/Skl 43384/43 Gkdos. in the records of 1/Skl I k X, II.

At 1900 Operations Division, Naval Staff estimated the ALSTERUFER to be in BD 8355.

Owing to an error in the radiogram to the ALSTERUFER it was sent as BE 8355. Considering the great distance of about 2 days' run between the two positions, the rest of the contents of this radiogram and the ensuing instructions, it is to be presumed that the ALSTERUFER recognized the error as such, and that no disadvantageous consequences resulted.

One of our submarines reported sighting the ALSTERUFER at 1230 in BE 7242 on course 180 degrees, speed five knots. The Naval Staff considers this sighting improbable and informed the ALSTERUFER of it, ordering that should the ship really be in that area, she is to proceed on easterly course by night with maximum speed, and by day zigzagging between 20 degrees and 15 degrees W on northerly or southerly courses in order to feign a British north- or southbound ship. Our destroyers will be in BE 6684 at 1000 on 28 Dec. The rendezvous must be reached by proceeding on suitable courses during the night.

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If the position of the ALSTERUFER is the same as scheduled the ship is not to head for point "Anna" from point "Hilde", but for BE 2890. Detailed course instructions will be transmitted at noon on 26 Dec.

There is no data for a weather forecast. There is an extended zone of high pressure over the eastern part of the North Atlantic.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty five planes were detected over the Bay of Biscay. In the course of the morning these planes repeatedly reported the BERNAU formation sailing on an easterly course, without stating its exact composition.

At 0846 an enemy warship was detected in AM 0177, and at 0953 a British warship was detected in AM 7252.

One British vessel was detected in each of the following: at 1334 in BD 6660, at 1235 in AM 4479, at 1307 in BF 2368 and at 1339 in BF 3171.

At 1022 our air reconnaissance reported a merchant ship west-southwest of the Faeroes, on course 310 degrees, at 1413 three steamers south of Portland, course southwest, at 1715 two destroyers in BF 6140, course north, speed 15 knots as well as one cruiser, probably of the FIJI class, in BE 6143, course north, speed 15 - 20, time not mentioned.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the BERNUA:

According to a report from Group West the torpedo boat T "27" accompanied by the torpedo boat T "22" remained behind the formation because of severe rudder damage and drifted in BE 7253 at 2245 out of control; however, at 0517 on 25 Dec. she joined the formation again, steering with her propellers.

As the enemy planes shadowed continuously throughout the night of 24 Dec. several Ju 88's were kept on call at immediate readiness. The destroyer Z "23" which had been detached on the outward passage, passed La Coubre at 0612 coming in escorted by minesweepers. For brief report of operation destroyer Z "23" see Teletype 1115. Due to sea damage compartments 13 and 14 were full of water, and the boat was therefore unable to proceed with the formation westward. The passage back was very difficult on account of the following sea and was possible only after compartment 13 had been pumped out. The destroyer was repeatedly attacked by enemy planes. One 3.7 cm hit was observed on one of the attacking planes. From 1446 to 1700 the boat searched in vain

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for crash-planes in BE 8916 by order of Group West.

According to a further report from Group West the 8th Destroyer Flotilla reported its position in BF 9148, course 100 degrees by short signal at 1400. Several enemy planes shadowed the formation continuously until 1000. The defense against single attacks demanded a high consumption of ammunition. At first 14, and in the afternoon ten Ju 98's were sent out for close escort.

At 0930 destroyer ZH "I" was detached from the formation because of salting up. The destroyer had to be towed in by a torpedo boat.

After 1046 the Group could no longer gather from radio intelligence whether enemy planes still maintained contact with the formation, but concludes from the short signal received at 1400 that this was no longer the case.

Up to the end of the day nothing further to report on the return passage of the formation.

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

Group West reported the following plan to outflank the carrier group supposedly sailing in BE 50:

"1. ALSTERUFER to continue on northerly course via BE 2416 to reach BE 2362 on the morning of 27 Dec., and BE 6343 on the evening of 27 Dec. There the ship will be picked up by destroyers and torpedo boats at 1000 on 28 Dec.

2. The torpedo boats leave Brest for BF 5571 by way of point "Liebe", then they will head for the rendezvous on a direct course. The boats are to leave so that they reach point "Liebe" by dusk.

3. The destroyers will leave Royan for point "Rose", from there they are to head for BE 9314. The destroyers are to leave so that BF 8255 will be reached by dusk on 27 Dec. The boats are to join the unit to be protected and the torpedo boats on receipt of order from Group West as the situation demands.

4. The object of the destroyers and torpedo boats proceeding separately, as well as the original feint course of the destroyers is to deceive any enemy planes which may shadow the formation, so that the course of the destroyers will not indicate the rendezvous point from the very beginning.

5. Depending on the situation at the time the formation will put into either Brest or Bordeaux.

6. The plan was reported to the Commander in Chief, Navy and was approved by him.

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7. Approval, and an order to this effect to the ALSTERUFER are requested as soon as possible".

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The convoy "1203" Hook- Elbe consisting of four steamers totalling 9,097 BRT with strong escort put to sea at 1530. The convoy "474" Elbe - Hook was postponed until 27 Dec.

Minesweeping and mine clearance was carried out as planned; during the night of 25 Dec. there was no activity owing to fog. One mine was cleared north of Borkum, two mines south-west of Den Helder.

Nine convoys totalling 57,455 BRT were carried out in Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

In the morning the PQ convoy was again detected by our submarines and air reconnaissance. At 0901 submarine U "601" reported parts of the convoy in our patrol line in AB 6720 on course 60 degrees, At 1602 the same boat reported the convoy in AB 6723 on a course of 60 degrees, speed 8 knots, southerly wind force 7, rain, falling barometer and visibility 2 miles. At 1814 the submarine U "601" reported the enemy in AB 64 and 1843, then the boat was driven off by destroyers and the contact was broken in AB 6496. At 1648 submarine U "716" reported a destroyer in AB 6574.

The Air Commander, Lofoten reported the convoy in AB 6492 at 1413.

Own Situation:

Operation Against the PQ Convoy:

At 1121 Commander, Submarines, Norway ordered the submarine group "Eisenbart" to operate on the basis of the report from the submarine U "601" which had contacted the enemy, and gave permission to attack.

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As soon as the submarines contact the enemy they are to send beacon signals in order to maintain contact.

At 0410 Operations Division, Naval Staff transmitted extracts from existing orders, which were applicable to Commanding Admiral, Task Force to the Chief, Naval Staff through Group West; they were as follows:

1. From the orders for the engagement of surface forces dated 19 Feb. 1943, on which the operational orders of Admiral, Northern Waters are based;

2. From the operational orders of Admiral, Northern Waters concerning the operation Eastern Front dated 1 May 1943, concerning conduct in the case of an encounter with the enemy.

For copy 1/Skl 43249/43 Gkdos. see "Operation SCHARNHORST", appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.

The above orders provide that decisions concerning the method and execution of the operation rest with the tactical commander at sea. Seen from this point of view Operations Division, Naval Staff considers it best to confine itself to clear orders to attack the convoy and to leave the method of execution to the commander at sea, unless fresh observations are made which make intervention necessary.

The Task Force reported to Group North/Fleet that the present reconnaissance over the convoy was completely inadequate and that it was considered absolutely necessary to extend it in search of heavy enemy forces.

Commanding Admiral, Task Force considered the best time for a tactical surprise the beginning of the "shooting" twilight and not the beginning of the astronomical twilight. On 26 Dec. this lasts only from 1106 to 1151 in latitude 73 degrees North. If the encounter takes place further north, which is probable, there is no "shooting" twilight at all, that is, there will be no lighting conditions at all which could be employed for the gunnery of a heavy ship. Commanding Admiral, Task Force refers to the experiences of 31 Dec. 1942.

At 1412 the Naval Staff issued order to Group North:

"Commanding Admiral, Task Force is to sail in good time for operations against the reported PQ convoy."

After the return of the Chief, Naval Staff to the "Bismarck" Headquarters, the review of the situation, transmitted in the evening by Group North/Fleet, and its proposals for the operation were thoroughly discussed.

The Naval Staff could not agree to the engagement of the destroyers alone.

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At 1925 the Chief, Naval Staff issued the following order to Group North/Fleet, Admiral, Northern Waters, Commanding Admiral, Task Force:

1. By sending an important convoy laden with food and arms for the Russians the enemy will make the heroic fighting by our army in the east even more difficult. We must help.

2. The convoy is to be attacked by the SCHARNHORST and destroyers.

3. The tactical situation must be exploited with courage and skill. The battle must not be waged to achieve only partial success. The situation, once attacked, must be fought out. Our strongest weapon is the superior guns of the SCHARNHORST. Therefore every attempt must be made to engage her. The destroyers are to go into action accordingly.

4. The decision to break off the attack left to discretion. As a rule the attack should be broken off on the appearance of heavy forces.

5. The crews are to be instructed on these lines. I have confidence in your initiative and fighting spirit. Good luck."

At 1940 the following weather report for the Bear Island Straits was received from Group North/Fleet:

Southerly storm increasing, force 8-9, sea 6-7. As from 26 Dec: veering slightly to southwest, force 6-8, heavy southwest sea, mainly cloudy, intermittent rain, visibility improving only temporarily to 10 miles, otherwise 3-4 miles. Polar coast squally, southwest 6-8 cloud. On 26 Dec. intermittent snow and rain, medium visibility. Snow-storms in the Barents Sea. Admiral, Northern Waters was asked by the Group to transmit his own weather reports constantly.

At 2110 Admiral, Northern Waters reported a similar forecast to that of Group North and expected a slowing down of the winds to force 5-6 with snow and showers, and visibility outside the showers, and visibility outside the showers from 3 to 5 miles for the afternoon of 26 Dec.

At 2048 Group North/Fleet reported:

"1. The weather report transmitted was confirmed by reports from submarines with even greater wind strength. In the area of the submarines: sea 6-8, wind force up to 9. Tendency to freshen up also confirmed by meteorologists attached to Admiral, Northern Waters and the Air Commander.

2. In view of these weather conditions and the development of the weather air operations were impossible. It was probable that submarines would no longer be able to make or maintain contact, in addition to this Commander, Submarines,

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Norway doubted whether the submarines would be able to occupy position ahead. The destroyers would also not be able to go into action.

3. An operation under these conditions is weighed with too many unfavorable factors. Decisive successes cannot be counted on. I therefore suggest breaking off the operation. Should the overall situation demand an operation despite these facts, I can only suggest that the SCHARNHORST be sent out to search for and attack the convoy without the destroyers.

4. Report on decision as soon as possible.

At this time the considerations of the Naval Staff were based on the fact that the Task Force must attack in accordance with the task for which it had been concentrated in the northern area, if circumstances at all allowed. The critical situation of the hard-pressed Army in the east made this operation necessary, the more so since the bringing up of supplies by the northern sea route had evidently again become of great importance to the Russians.

The conditions for the execution of the operation seemed to be favorable because

a. so far no heavy converging group had been detected by our air reconnaissance or observed in any other way,

b. there existed the possibility of surprising the enemy since he had already got two convoys through to Northern Russia unmolested by our forces,

c. the weather was certainly a hindrance to operations by our destroyers, but it likewise hindered the engagement of light enemy naval forces.

The Naval Staff thus decided that in view of the situation as a whole an order canceling the operation did not at the time seem to be justified. It was left to the Commanding Admiral, Task Force to act in accordance with the situation. If the destroyers could not ride the sea, the task would have to be carried out by the SCHARNHORST alone, in cruiser warfare style. In a heavy sea the battleship would not be in very much danger from enemy destroyers and cruisers.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff informed the Commanding Admiral Group North/Fleet by telephone of the Chief, Naval Staff's decision. In addition to this Group North/Fleet received the following directive:

"If the destroyers of the Task Force cannot ride the sea the task must be carried out by the SCHARNHORST alone in cruiser warfare style. The decision on this matter rests with Commanding Admiral, Task Force, Group North will inform the Commanding Admiral, Task Force accordingly.

The Task Force left Alta Fjord at 1900 as planned.

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At about 2200, Commander, Submarines, Norway ordered seven boats to man the new patrol line from AC 1778 to 4734. The eight boat was forced to return on account of technical damage. The new patrol line is scheduled to be manned by 0600 on 26 Dec.

Remaining Situation Norway/Northern Waters:

On 23 Dec. 17 enemy planes dropped bombs in the area of Kirkenes without causing serious damage.

At 0400 on 25 Dec. a floating crane with four tugs left Drontheim for the North.

Tanker BROMBERG which ran aground in Oslo Fjord refloated again at 1800.

Thirty four ships were escorted north and 26 south. Thirty one ships remained in harbor owing to lack of escorts.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

V. Submarine Warfare:

Submarine U "392" torpedoed one destroyer from a fast moving convoy on northeasterly course in AL 4592. The vessel is presumed to have sunk on account of the heavy sea.

Otherwise no special reports from the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

As was reported later about 1500 to 2000 high-explosives were dropped on several air force building sites by about 1000 planes during flights over northern France on 24 Dec. Several barracks were destroyed or damaged.

On 25 Dec. single flights without attacks as well as an attack by two Typhoons on a He 177 north of Lorient were reported.

2. German Reich Territory:

No air activity reported.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

At noon 75 Fortresses with fighter protection attacked railway installations at Bolzano causing considerable damage. One of the attacking planes was shot down by anti-aircraft artillery. Minor forces carried out further attacks on the airfield and air base at Vicenza, as well as on Pisa and Pontedera.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast five enemy reconnaissance planes were reported over the Aegean by day and one by night.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

At 0915 on 24 Dec. a convoy consisting of 18 freighters escorted by two corvettes left Gibraltar; one transport and three freighters coming from the Mediterranean joined the convoy.

Nine freighters from the Mediterranean entered Gibraltar.

Two transports with troops aboard coming from the Atlantic arrived at Gibraltar. The transports were escorted by a CAIRO class cruiser and two destroyers.

On the morning of 25 Dec. a cruiser with three funnels coming from the Mediterranean put into Gibraltar.

During the night of 24 Dec. probably ten ships and two destroyers coming from the Atlantic entered the Mediterranean. The visibility was interrupted by fog.

On the morning of 25 Dec. eleven freighters and four gun boats on easterly course were sighted off Tres Forcas.

Own Situation:

One vessel of 300 BRT was escorted off the south coast of France.

At 1500 on 24 Dec. the German steamer NICOLINE MAERSK was fired on by British destroyers in the south of the Ebro river within the three mile zone; she was heavily damaged and ran aground. The ship must be presumed lost. The crew was rescued.

War Diary, Part C, Vol. VIII contains a report on further measures taken in this matter.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The minelayer NIEDERSACHSEN escorted by three minesweepers left La Spezia in the evening for the execution of a minelaying operation. Further reports are not yet available. The torpedo boats T "23" and T "24" transferred from La Spezia to Piombino to carry out another minelaying operation.

Three further minesweepers arrived in Venice via the Po river, thus a total of five minesweepers have been transferred there up till now.

3. Area Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

There are no special reports on operation "Herbstgewitter 2".

The Italian steamer BRUNO CALEARI was commissioned on 20 Dec. as the hospital ship BONN.

b. Aegean:

At 1550 an enemy submarine fired on an auxiliary sailing vessel north-northwest of Iraklion and submerged after being fired on by coastal and anti-aircraft artillery. Two Ju 88's were sent out in pursuit. A further enemy submarine was north of Levitha at 1636. Our own escort tasks were carried out without special event.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

Naval landing craft operating in the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch during the night of 24 Dec. did not sight any enemy objectives. Owing to unfavorable weather conditions the 1st PT Boat Flotilla broke off operations.

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Submarine U "9" returned from enemy patrol and put into Constanta.

In the evening a tug with a lighter ran aground off Eupatoria.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The naval Attache, Tokyo reports:

"I. According to information from the Japanese Naval Staff the situation in the area of Cape Marcus, where a maximum of 3,000 troops, mostly Australians, landed, has scarcely changed. An attempt at reinforcement made on 21 Dec. was frustrated with heavy losses to the enemy. The enemy is very busily engaged building airfields. The landing place has been sealed off on both sides by major Japanese forces. Landings are expected at other points on the island. The speed of the advance through the jungle is very slow, thus practically all movements are made with boats along the coast.

2. During the attack on the Gilberts the American employed their carriers in a new way. The attack proceeded as follows:

a. At dawn the bombers attacked from the Ellice Island. Then the battleships and cruisers carried out a two-hour bombardment, having also approached from the south. Then the enemy landed.

b. The Japanese authorities therefore got the impression that the carriers were also in the south as usual. Reconnaissance planes were sent out accordingly.

c. In reality the carriers were to the northward, half-way to the Marshall Islands. Short-range bombers sent out from there in the direction of the Gilberts are prevented from approaching by fighters, with which the carriers are exclusively equipped.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Report from Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff:

a. The General of Fortress Engineers sent in the winter building program for the western area for information. Considering the dependence on the amount of concrete available, the project is mainly of theoretical value, as practically speaking only work can be completed which has been already begun or can be completed within a reasonable time.

b. According to information from the Operations Staff, Navy, Armed Forces High Command to the Organization and Mobilization Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff on 24 Dec. it is intended to call up the emergency units of of class A on 15 Jan. 1944 for employment in the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West. The Naval Staff is to report on the consequences to be expected from this measure.

To this the Operations Staff, Navy, Armed Forces High Command and the Admiral, Fuehrer Headquarters received the following reply:

"The execution of this measure would result in the discontinuation of basic military training for reserves as well as the training of specialists in consequence of the withdrawal of nucleus units and schools.

Since, in addition to this, the call-up is not scheduled for any definite period, the constant flow of personnel within the Navy, which is a necessary condition for the continuation of naval warfare would be broken. The execution of the measure is therefore impossible in the naval sphere as the quick completion of the submarine and fleet building program demanded by the Fuehrer, which is being carried out under the greatest difficulties as regards material, would be ruined by the lack of personnel."

The Chief, Naval Staff ordered a brief and concise report to be sent to the Armed Forces High Command, stating that the measure is both impracticable and beyond dispute.

In accordance with this the following reply was sent to the Armed Forces High Command, Navy and to the Admiral, Fuehrer Headquarters:

"Renewed investigation of the consequences of the measures it is proposed to take did not show any way of executing them which would not severely injure the basic functions of naval warfare. The removal of even the smallest part would must seriously damage the whole machinery.

In view of the naval tasks set the Commander in Chief, Navy, by the Fuehrer, the execution of the measures which were prepared by the Navy on the basis of the Fuehrer Directive No. 51 can only be put into effect by the Commander in Chief, Navy in direct connection with combat tasks. As a preparatory measure they are impossible for the Commander in Chief, Navy.

Even before the setting up of emergency units ordered from there in connection with Fuehrer Directive No. 51, the High Command, Navy transferred units in the strength of about 18,750 men to the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West, which correspond to degree A as regards their composition. In addition to this it is intended to transfer further units from degree A in the strength of about 3,000 men to the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West in the course of January."

c. The Fuehrer ordered an investigation of whether the battery Greville, the mounting of which was discontinued at Cherbourg, can be used anywhere else.

II. Report from Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff:

a. On the BERNAU situation, in accordance with the statement under Situation West Area. The Chief, Naval Staff ordered Admiral, Fuehrer Headquarters to report to the Fuehrer on the situation with regard to the ship.

b. On the ALSTERUFER and other blockade-runners.

The report on the sighting of the ALSTERUFER by one of our submarines is considered improbable. Group West's proposal with regard to sailing directions (see War Diary 25 Dec.) is considered inexpedient, as it would be too easily recognized. Operations Division, Naval Staff considers a more southerly course advisable. There may perhaps arise some difficulty for the destroyers and torpedo boats with regard to time, if the boats have to leave too early before twilight in order to reach the rendezvous. The divergent courses of both flotillas must be adhered to. A definite decision will depend on the situation.

Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff discussed this question with Operations Branch, Group West by teletype at 1750 on 25 Dec. As soon as the Chief, Naval Staff takes a decision on 27 Dec. the Naval Staff will send a radiogram containing sailing instructions to the ALSTERUFER without interfering with the command of Group West. On a counter-proposal from Operations Branch, Group West, Group West will take over the command only after the issuance of the

above-mentioned order from Naval Staff.

For copy of the teletype discussion see records "Bringing in of the TAVE" in appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.

The alleged sighting of the ALSTERUFER in BE 7242 reported on 25 Dec. by the submarine U "305" was at first thought to be the OSORNO. After a check-up on the part of Submarine Division, Naval Staff it appeared that it could also have been the ALSTERUFER.

Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff furthermore reports that the blockade-runners waiting in the South Atlantic, the RIO GRANDE, WESERLAND and BURGENLAND have been ordered to proceed on northerly course (see War Diary 24 Dec. War in Foreign Waters).

The Chief, Naval Staff agreed to the measures regarding the ALSTERUFER and raised the question of whether to try once again to bring in one of the three above blockade-runners through the Denmark Straits.

The Chief, Naval Staff considers it would be a most difficult task for the blockade-runners to leave the Bay of Biscay. The Fuehrer has declared that he would not make such an attempt! A decision is necessary by mid-January.

III. During the report of Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff, a report was received by telephone according to which the SCHARNHORST had made contact with the enemy east of Bear Island.

IV. Army Situation:

On the south Dnieper the enemy is carrying out strong attacks. The most tenacious defensive fighting is concentrated in the area west of Kiev. Heavy fighting is also in progress in the area of Vitebsk.

Special Items.

I. In reply to an inquiry, the Naval Attache, Helsinki received the following instructions from Operations Division, Naval Staff:

"The Naval Attaches are to be instructed that the Japanese Admiralty has several times given official confirmation to the Naval Staff on the exactness of the numbers of ships sunk.

The Japanese Admiralty, however, admits the possibility that the types of the ships might have been mistaken.

The Naval Staff considers the reports of the Japanese successful as authentic, the more so since the enemy denies these reports in an extraordinarily

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careful and roundabout manner. The carriers lost by the Americans are mostly merchantmen converted into carriers which are very vulnerable and can be sunk by one torpedo."

II. A thorough report on movements in the Crimea was made by Naval Group South on 15 Dec. with reference to the study made by Operations Division, Naval Staff on 19 Nov. Appended to the report are sketches by Admiral Black Sea for operation "Ruderboot" (evacuation of the Crimea by sea) as well as data from Army High Command 17 for operation "Litzmann" (evacuation of the Crimea by way of the Perekop Strait). Details and alternatives of both operations were thoroughly discussed between Admiral Black Sea and Army High Command 17. In addition to this the preparatory measures taken by the Group were gone over. For copy of the report as per 1/Skl 3735/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see records of Surface Warships Operations "Black Sea II, 14", Operations Division, Naval Staff.

Situation 26 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

For direction of the ALSTERUFER by the Naval Staff in accordance with the agreement with Group West, see under Situation West Area.

All ships in foreign waters were informed in Radiogram 1644 from Naval Staff that the OSORNO put into the Gironde during the night of 25 Dec.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

In the morning only two planes were detected on reconnaissance in the Bay of Biscay.

One British vessel was detected at 0907 in AL 6491, and one at 2126 in AL 6120.

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At 1735 a Ju 290 equipped with ship's search gear detected a large formation of ships in BD 6260, giving no details, and according to another report in BD 6610. The Operations Division, Naval Staff did not learn of this report until after 2300 when Group West sent a radiogram to the ALSTERUFER, ordering her to switch off the Metex receiver.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the BERNAU:

During the night of 25 Dec. the return passage of the formation proceeded without special event. The BERNAU was taken over from the 8th Destroyer Flotilla and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla by the 4th Escort Division: while entering the Gironde the ship got caught in unexpected fog. The ship lost sight of the proposed float of the preceding minesweeper and ran over a wreck (probably of a mine-exploding vessel "21"), tearing open the bottom of the ship. At 0456 Group West reported that the blockade-runner was aground immediately off the breakwater of Le Verdon in a depth of 5 m and with 5 m of water in the ship.

The choice of this place, which is particularly suitable for the security and unloading of the ship, and the bringing in of the heavily damaged ship under these circumstances is a particularly outstanding navigational performance on the part of the commander of the BERNAU, Captain Hellmann.

Everything possible will be done to salvage, unload and secure the ship.

It is tragic that the great success of the blockade-runner had to be endangered in this way so shortly before fulfilment. It is to be presumed, however, that we shall succeed in unloading the irreplaceable cargo. Of the 6,342 tons, 3,944 tons are caoutchouc, 1,826 tons tin, 180 tons tugsten ore, 223 tons cocoanut oil, and other scarce valuable cargo.

The report of the 4th Escort Division gives details of the measures taken to unload, salvage and protect the ship, Group West reports further measures for anti-aircraft protection by the bringing up of six heavy Air Force batteries and sending out of single planes of the 3rd Air Force on night fighter operations. There are plenty of planes available for daylight operations. Also the returning destroyers and torpedo boats will be engaged in anti-aircraft protection. For copy of report see Telegram 1650.

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla, the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, and the torpedo boat T "25" with the destroyer ZH "I" in tow put into port.

From the short report of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla it appears that the flotilla will probably be ready for action

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again with five vessels on the afternoon of 27 Dec. It is reported that the formation shot down a total of three enemy planes. The flotilla draws attention to the following experiences:

"1. It seems no longer possible to pass the enemy anti-aircraft defenses Brest - Cape Ortegal unobserved. The enemy is in a position to establish immediate contact with several machines, and even to shadow two or three different groups.

2. The successful operation was possible owing to the fact that the BERNAU was not recognized by the naval forces on 23 Dec.

3. The cessation of attacks by closed formations of bombers and torpedo planes shows that the enemy forces are not in such abundance everywhere, otherwise the defense would have been considerably stronger.

4. Should the operation be repeated, a separated advance of the flotillas is advisable.

5. The sending of radiograms outside the Norddeich "dead space" is unreliable. The range of the telefunken sender "ZZZ 27" is inadequate. The Biscay wave west of 7 degrees W is unreliable; I suggest repetition of all radiograms on coastal short wave and that a permanent watch be kept on the coastal short wave aboard the commander's boats."

For copy of the short report see Telegram 1220.

The bringing in of the OSORNO succeeded almost as planned. The dummy course steered on 23 Dec., which successfully foiled the premature discovery of the blockade-runner by the carrier-borne plane, played the most essential part in it. The commander of the ship evidently knew how to adapt himself wholeheartedly to the spirit behind the operational plan. Surprise, favorable weather and luck did the rest.

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

On 25 Dec. Group West requested that no alteration be made to the rendezvous for the TRAVE in 46 degrees 40' N 12 degrees 30' W. At 1700 on 26 Dec. the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was to be transferred from Brest to Canaret Bay in order to become independent of the fog.

On the basis of the review on the enemy situation, the Operations Division, Naval Staff decided to bring the ALSTER-UFER to the rendezvous in 6684 from point "Hilde" by way of BE 2872 and 5644. It was decided to drop the rendezvous in BE 6343, about 50 miles further north, as projected on 25 Dec.

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The ALSTERUFER thus received the following instructions:

"1. Proceed from point "Hilde" by way of grid square Bruno Emil 2872 and 5644 to 6684.

2. Zigzag during daylight between 2872 and 5644 and maintain a general southerly course when sighted by the enemy.

3. The two intermediate points 2872 and 5644 need not be headed for exactly. They only given an indication of the route to be followed in general.

4. Rendezvous with destroyers at 1000 on 28 Dec. in Bruno Emil 6684. The destroyers will wait there until 1600.

5. As from today the ship will probably be detected by our air reconnaissance. Do not exchange recognition signals as long as the ship is proceeding on enemy courses."

Operations Division, Naval Staff also transmitted the weather report for 26 Dec. to the ALSTERUFER, and the forecasts for the night of 26 Dec. and for 27 Dec. Stormy northwest winds, only gradually abating, quickly changing cloud, showers and changing visibility to be expected in the Bay of Biscay. (See Radiograms 1533 and 0125/27).

After Operations Division, Naval Staff sent the sailing directions to the ALSTERUFER Group West took over command and informed the Operations Division, Naval Staff of the radiogram to this effect to the TAVE.

At 2115 Group West reported that according to the Air Command, Atlantic it was uncertain whether planes would be able to operate on 27 Dec. as extended fog and fog in high altitudes was likely to threaten the take-off and landing. Reconnaissance with ship's search gear in the western Bay of Biscay, armed reconnaissance with He 177's and bomber operations by He 177's after the detection of enemy forces are intended.

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report.

Channel Coast:

During the night of 25 Dec. the minelaying operation N 4 was carried out as planned by four boats of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla. From 0111 on enemy ships were detected off Cape d'Antifer and fired on by coastal batteries.

At 0700 on 25 Dec. two members of an enemy sabotage party were taken prisoner by military forces at Gravelines. The party was supposed to have been detached from a PT boat in

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a rubber dinghy. The dinghy capsized. Four men are still missing.

The transfer to Le Havre of steamer MUENSTERLAND, which was damaged in Cherbourg on 24 Oct. in the course of an enemy air raid, is planned for the night of 26 Dec.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea.

One mine was cleared northwest of Borkum and one southwest of Heligoland.

The convoy "1203" Hook-Elbe was carried out as planned.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Only two planes were detected operating over the North Sea in the morning.

Intensified reconnaissance was carried out in the sea area of the Faeroes and Jan Mayen, in the area of Tromsø, in the area of Banak - Bear Island, off the north coast of Kola and in the area of Swatøi Noss up to the Fisherpeninsula. The reconnaissance was inexhaustive.

One British vessel was located off Kirkenes in about 309 degrees at 2236.

Own Situation:

Operation against the PQ convoy:

0007

The Air Commander, Lofoten Islands, reports that a BV 138 plane carried out reconnaissance for the convoy from 1225 to 1510 on 25 Dec.; the exact composition of the convoy could not be determined. Within a range of 80 km no enemy covering group was detected. At 1015 the Operations Division, Naval Staff received the situation report from Group North/Fleet of 0935. According to this report Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported at 2116 on 25 Dec.:

"Wind force in operations area probably 6-9 southwest. Destroyer operations greatly hampered. Speed limited."

There are no further reports from Commanding Admiral, Task Force.

Further reports to the Operations Division, Naval Staff give the following picture of the course of operations:

0730

The Task Force arrived in AC 4247 after advancing as planned, protected by a destroyer screen against submarines. Commanding Admiral, Task Force placed the destroyers in a reconnaissance line which proceeded west-southwest 10 miles ahead of the SCHARNHORST, speed 12 knots, course 250 degrees.

0800

The Task Force altered course to 230 degrees. According to the operations order of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force, the attack on the convoy in closed formation was scheduled to take place at about 1000.

0924

Our destroyers observed numerous star shells in the vicinity of the SCHARNHORST. On the destroyer Z "33" one gained the impression that Commanding Admiral, Task Force intended to engage the escorting cruisers so that the destroyers could attack the less protected convoy. From the Commanding Admiral, Task Force' order to the 4th Destroyer Flotilla to report on the situation it can be concluded that already at that time Commanding Admiral, Task Force expected that the destroyers had contacted the enemy convoy.

0945

The submarine U "277" detected the convoy in AB 6365. At the same time our air reconnaissance sighted the convoy in AB 6368 after two Ju 88's and three BV 138's had taken off for diverging search patrol. Course and composition of the enemy forces were not reported by the plane.

0955

Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported: "I am being fired on in 4133, probably by a cruiser equipped with radar."

0943

Radio intelligence picked up a report for the first time from an enemy shadower (I.L.P.) to Scapa, telling of an unidentified vessel in 149 degrees 12 miles away from unknown position, course 140 degrees, speed 28 knots. This shadower continuously transmitted further reports to base headquarters, and at 1301 for the first time to D. G. O., probably the commander of the formation. From these reports the positions and courses of the SCHARNHORST throughout the whole day could be followed. For the radio intellig-

ence reports see appendix to the volume "Operation SCHARNHORST". (Appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a).

1027 The reconnaissance line of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla turned about in 4413 AC left lower corner on radio orders from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force, and proceeded on course 70 degrees at 25 knots. The reason for the reconnaissance group's alteration of course to the northeast with high speed is not easy to understand. The Commander of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla supposed that the Commanding Admiral, Task Force expected to meet with success in the above direction. Probably the Commanding Admiral, Task Force wanted to draw the destroyers nearer to his ship after making contact with the enemy.

1135 The destroyers altered course to 30 degrees by order of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force.

1240 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported:

"Engagement with several enemy ships in AC 4133.
Radar-directed fire from a heavy unit."

From this report it appeared that the SCHARNHORST stayed in the area of AC 4133 for about three hours, a fact which had already been concluded from the enemy reconnaissance reports.

1012 Our air reconnaissance located several vessels in AC 4745 by means of radar.

1130 The submarine U "277" sighted four silhouettes and several destroyers on easterly course which were supposed to be part of the convoy. The boat was driven off and tried to pursue the enemy.

1256 Admiral, Northern Waters reported that the operations scheduled by Air Commander North (West) could not be carried out on account of weather conditions and the planes would not take off until 2100.

1341 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force, issued the following order:

"The 4th Destroyer Flotilla is to operate against the convoy detected by the submarine U "277" in AB 6365 at 0945. Course and speed of the convoy are not known."

The flotilla altered course to 280 degrees. Gun flashes observed in the north gave a clue to the position of the SCHARNHORST.

1418 The flotilla received the following order from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force: "Withdrew." and in reply to further inquiry: "Return to base."

The destroyers altered course to 180 degrees and headed for point L I. On account of the weather they had to proceed at a speed of 12 knots.

At this point the Naval Staff presumes that in accordance with orders, the Commanding Admiral, Task Force withdrew from action on the appearance of heavy forces.

1525 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported his position in AC 4526, speed 27 knots, as well as intention to return via the approach route Ganvik.

An inquiry from Group North as to whether the destroyers were near the SCHARNHORST was answered

1557 by the Commanding Admiral, Task Force with the short signal: "No."

1651 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported:

"Position AC 4595, shadower."

Continuous shadowing was evident from the intercepted reports from the shadower ILP.

1620 Commander, Submarine, Norway ordered the submarines to occupy a new patrol line from AC 2247 to 5474 in the the previous order of succession with maximum continuous speed at 1700.

Apparantly a new enemy had approached from the southwest in the meanwhile. At 1600 the SCHARNHORST was clearly located by radar at an initial distance of 23 miles. Another unit, D. G. O. took over the task of shadower from I.L.P. and made for the SCHARNHORST on course east-northeast to east. According to dead reckoning this might have been the vessel located in AC 4745 at 1012. As D. G. O. later sent out tactical orders to the rest of the formation she was most probably in command of the covering group.

1656 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported:

"Engagement with a heavy battleship in AC 4677"

1724 "I am encircled by heavy forces."

The SCHARNHORST then tried to evade the encircling enemy on northeast to easterly courses, later on 100 degrees. As the enemy clearly detected every alternation of course, this attempt failed.

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- 1744 An enemy group (GRP) which had not appeared up till then contacted the SCHARNHORST and located her on bearing 345 degrees, range 5.5 miles.
- 1755 Group North ordered the 4th Destroyer Flotilla to report its position.
- 1815 Commander, Submarines, Norway ordered the submarines to head for the combat zone at maximum speed.
- 1819 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported:
"Enemy firing by radar at a range of more than 18 km."
At this time the SCHARNHORST was still proceeding on course 110 degrees at a speed of 26 knots. According to radio monitoring the enemy seems to have established communication between the northwest and southwest group at this time and exchanged different tactical signals. Among other things D.G.O. requested starshell fire from I. L. P. and asked at 1810 whether I. L. P. was able to observe the fall of shot.
- 1825 The Commanding Admiral, Task Force reported:
"To the Fuehrer! We will fight on until the last shell is fired."
- 1845 Enemy forces, probably coming from the southeast, first located and then sighted the SCHARNHORST.
- 1911 The 4th Destroyer Flotilla was ordered by Admiral Northern Waters to make the combat zone at maximum speed. The flotilla headed for AC 4910 at 24 knots.
- 1925 The 4th Destroyer Flotilla was ordered by Group North/Fleet to make the approach from the coast.
No further reports from the SCHARNHORST were received.
- 1919 An order from D. G. O. was picked up:
"Finish her off with torpedoes."
- 1920 "Fire a star shell!"
- 1956 "Clear the area of the target except for those ships with torpedoes and one destroyer with searchlight."

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1935 The Chief, Naval Staff informed the Fuehrer of the situation by telephone, expressing the hope still prevailing at that time, that the SCHARNHORST might successfully pullthrough in view of the close-range fighting by night, or at least inflict heavy damage on the enemy.

The 5th Air Force was asked whether it could attack with the torpedoes.

2024 Group North/Fleet ordered the 4th Destroyer Flotilla to break off the action immediately, to avoid an engagement with the enemy and to put into skerries.

2019 The Chief, Naval Staff ordered the following radiogram to be sent to the Commanding Admiral, Task Force and to the SCHARNHORST:

"Your heroic fight for the victory and greatness of Germany will be an example to us in the future."

2020 The following radiogram from the Fuehrer was sent to the Commanding Admiral, Task Force and the SCHARNHORST:

"My thoughts, and those of the German people are with you in this critical hour. Adolf Hitler."

2108 The 4th Destroyer Flotilla received the following order from Group North/Fleet:

"The enemy situation is obscure. A group of heavy units was in the SCHARNHORST combat zone in about AC 4670 at 1700. The possibility that this group and other forces will comb the coastal zone for the 4th Destroyer Flotilla must be counted on."

The 4th Destroyer Flotilla received orders from Group North/Fleet:

"If there is still no contact with the enemy, withdraw to the west and make for the skerries as you consider best; otherwise act as the situation demands."

2145 The 4th Destroyer Flotilla received the following order from Group North/Fleet:

"According to radio intelligence a Russia - U. K. convoy is also to be expected."

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At 0130 on 27 Dec. four boats of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla passed the outlying point FSR 1 coming in. The fifth boat, the destroyer Z "33" seems to have been detached beforehand.

2250 The following proposal was transmitted to the Admiral, Fuehrer Headquarters as a contribution to the communique of the Armed Forces High Command:

"On 26 Dec. a formation of German naval forces attacked a convoy bound for Russia in Northern Waters. After a long battle with superior British naval forces the battleship SCHARNHORST sank after a heroic fight and firing until the last shell. Heavy damage was inflicted on the convoy and the enemy escort forces."

Durthier reports on the progress of this operation and its tragic end are still awaited. In particular there is no clue to the losses and damage inflicted on the enemy, nor to the question of whether any of the survivors of the SCHARNHORST were rescued.

Therefore an evaluation of the operation must wait until definite news is available.

A summarized report on the SCHARNHORST operation will be given in the War Diary.

Remaining Situation:

At 1248 a sub-chaser sighted two torpedo tracks in the mouth of Bokn Fjord.

Twenty one ships were escorted north and 16 south. Twenty three ships remained lying in port owing to lack of escorts.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

V. Submarine Warfare.

According to radio intelligence one steamer was torpedoed by our submarines in that area of Colon and one in the area of Maldive Islands.

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They were sunk by the submarines U "530" and U "178" respectively.

The submarine U "392" reports from the North Atlantic that in addition to a hit on a destroyer (see War Diary 25 Dec.) it scored a further hit, probably on a steamer.

At 1250 our air reconnaissance detected a formation in BD 6616 on unknown course. The Group was therefore ordered to occupy the patrol line from BD 9523 to 7431 at 1800 on 27 Dec.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

There are no special reports.

In the Atlantic a fighter thrust by four FW 190's and night operation by one Ju 88 brought no contact with the enemy.

2. German Reich Territory:

No air activity was reported.

3. Mediterranean Theater.

No particular activity was reported from the Italian area

Small enemy forces attacked three stations and one airfield.

Six reconnaissance planes were observed in the Aegean. Single bombs were dropped on Stampalia without causing damage. The Chalkis passage was probably mined by six planes during the night of 27 Dec.

4. Eastern Front:

For operations and results of the reconnaissance by the 5th Air Force see "Operation Against the PQ convoy."

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area of Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

It is reported retrospectively that at 1430 on 24

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Dec. a-convoy consisting of 23 freighters escorted by one destroyer, eight corvettes and two Agate boats passed the area off Tarifa in westerly direction. On 26 Dec. two transports, one light cruiser and three destroyers left Gibraltar in westerly direction. One FIJI class cruiser and one AURORA class cruiser coming from the Mediterranean put into Gibraltar.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Area of the German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

Photographic reconnaissance of the Corsican harbors was impossible because of fighter screen.

Own Situation:

During the night of 24 Dec. the minelaying operation south of Genoa was carried out by the minelayer NIEDERSACHSEN and two minesweepers according to plan. During the execution of the task one possible enemy submarine and several PT boats were detected by radar observation. The PT boats were fired on by our patrol boats off Rapallo without effect. Enemy surveillance of the coastal route was herewith again confirmed.

During the same night two torpedo boats carried out the minelaying operation "Bruecke" in the area of Nettunia as planned.

On the evening of 26 Dec. the minelayer DWARSLAEUFER left La Spezia for the execution of the minelaying task "Frosch". Two groups of naval landing craft formed the covering group. During the same night four assault boats of the 10th MAS Flotilla transferred from La Spezia to Porto Fino.

The traffic of motor coasters off the Italian east coast was hindered by unfavorable weather.

3. Area of Naval Group South:

a. Adriatic Sea:

By the afternoon of 26 Dec. Korcula was completely in our hands. After shelling Lastovo the PT boats S "36" and S "55" returned on account of the unfavorable weather conditions and re-entered Cattaro.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

At 0945 our air reconnaissance sighted a submerging

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submarine six miles northwest of Levitha.

Own Situation:

Two sailing vessels sank in the course of the enemy air attack on Cerigo on the morning of 25 Dec.

Two mines were cleared in Suda Bay. One mine exploded in Porto Lago (Leros).

c. Black Sea:

The vessels which ran aground in the area of Eupatoria and west of it have refloated and put into Ak Mechet. The naval artillery lighter MAL "4" which was fired on by enemy artillery off Pervomaisk on 24 Dec. was heavily damaged by six direct hits. It is impossible to salvage it. During the night of 26 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch was manned by two naval landing craft.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. Operation Scharnhorst:

At 0400 the Cryptographic Office, Armed Forces High Command transmitted the following announcement which was made by the British Admiralty late on the evening of 26 Dec.:

"The German battleship SCHARNHORST was sunk this evening off North Cape. On 26 Dec. vessels of the Home Fleet under the command of Admiral Frazer engaged the battleship SCHARNHORST. The British warships were escorting a convoy to Russia on the northern route. The battleship was sunk on Sunday evening."

At 0538 the following short signal was picked up by the submarine U "314" at 0455: "0430. Have taken over prisoners."

Further details must be awaited.

At 0407 Group North/Fleet reported that all boats of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla had entered the skerries.

At 0513 Group North/Fleet reported the plans of the 5th Air Force as follows:

"1. Exhaustive reconnaissance over a wide area in the combat zone for Commander, Submarines, in order to pick up survivors.

2. The remaining reconnaissance forces to carry out renewed reconnaissance for the detection of the PQ convoy,

3. If occasion demands the aerial torpedo squadron of He 115's will be sent out on request from the Navy, as far as the weather and the targets render such an operation possible."

According to a report from the Air Commander, North (East) at 0707 an operation was impossible at that time on account of the weather. At 0939 three FW 200's of Air Commander, North (West) took off from Banak for diverging search patrol.

After a preliminary examination of the bearings and observations made on 26 Dec. by Group North/Fleet it can be stated right away that the vessels detected in AC 4775 at 1012 were definitely enemy ships, evidently a group of heavy British naval units. At 1135 Group North/Fleet transmitted the following short report of operations by the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, covering the period 25 to 27 Dec.:

"1. At 1900 on 25 Dec. the group consisting of the SCHARNHORST and five destroyers of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla put to sea under the command of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force. At 2304 Lucie I, speed 25 knots to grid square 4247 AC upper left corner, the destroyers forming a protective screen against submarines. Wind force 7-8, southwest, stronger in squalls. In reply to an inquiry the Flotilla Commander reported that the destroyers were able to ride the sea.

2. At 0730 on 26 Dec. first of all reconnaissance patrol from AC 4164 lower right corner to AC 4196 lower left corner, speed 12 knots, course 250 degrees. From 0800 on course 230 degrees, the SCHARNHORST 10 miles behind the center of the reconnaissance line.

3. At 0924 numerous star shells over the SCHARNHORST. It was not realized that the ship was being shelled, but this was learned by radiogram. At 1028 in grid square 4413 AC, lower left corner, the reconnaissance line put about on receiving radio orders from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force and steered on course 70 degrees, speed 25 knots. The SCHARNHORST did not come in sight. Intentions were unknown. At 1135 a course of 30 degrees was ordered by the Commanding Admiral, Task Force.

4. At 1341 order from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force: the 4th Destroyer Flotilla is to operate against the convoy located by the submarine LUEBSEN in grid square 6365 AC at 0945, under the command of the Flotilla Commander; course and speed of the convoy unknown. The Flotilla altered course at 280 degrees. Gun flashes were observed in the north; this was an indication of the SCHARNHORST's position. At 1341 order from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force to the 4th Destroyer Flotilla: "Break off the action", and in reply to further inquiry, the Commanding Admiral, Task Force ordered "return to base". At 1418 course 180 degrees, making for Lucie 81. When the order to withdraw was given by the Commanding Admiral, Task Force, the weather made maximum speed out of the question, training of guns impossible and use of torpedoes very difficult. In addition to this there were no fresh reports on the size, kind and formation of the escort, so that in the view of the flotilla commander a closed attack by the whole flotilla was considered the only prospect of success, and it was planned to do this.

5. Return on account of the weather with a speed of 12 knots. At 1911 order from Admiral, Northern Waters, to head for the SCHARNHORST combat zone at maximum speed. The Flotilla steered for grid square 4 10 AC with a speed of

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24 knots. At 1925 order was received from Group North/Fleet to carry out the approach from the coast. The Flotilla then headed fro North Cape on course 140 degrees. From 2210 to 2240 use of radar produced only completely flat bearings and gun flashes aft. No fall of shot was observed. After Group North/Fleet had prohibited an engagement with the enemy, the Flotilla put in via SR 1 and anchored in Kaa Fjord at 0700 on 27 Dec.

6. During the attempt to assembe for a joint attack on the convoy the destroyer "33" lost contact. She returned independently. At 0120 on 27 Dec. she passed Lucie I and entered port.

7. The operation was carried out in particularly difficult weather conditions and heavy seas. On 26 Dec. the daylight hour was particularly dark even for this latitude.

8. Contrary to the advice of Group North/Fleet, the flotilla did not haul off to the west as then the maximum speed of the destroyers could not be taken advantage on account of the direction in which the sea was running.

9. The destroyer operation against the convoy in accordance with paragraph 4 promised success only under exceptionally favorable conditions.

A chronological review of the events starting 22 Dec. with a sketch of the action was made by the Operations Division, Naval Staff on the basis of information received up till 27 Dec. exclusively. For first copy see records "Operation Scharnhorst" (appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a).

The Naval Staff has drawn the following preliminary conclusions and information from the evidence available:

The main experience gained from the combat is the fact that the enemy is able to take bearings in the darkness at daylight ranges of visibility and that he can fire accurately at daylight ranges.

The only advantages which the small radius of visibility during the night gives to the inferior force, by offering the chance of a surprise attack, is therefore eliminated.

While so far the enemy air superiority hindered operations by naval forces by day, there now also arises a new situation for operations by vessels with torpedo arament at night; it can only be met by superiority in numbers.

Particularly serious is the fact that our own radar equipment does not possess either the great range and reliability, or the great accuracy of the enemy equipment. For this reason the SCHARNHORST had very little chance of using her guns successfully.

Contrary to all former conception of night tactics, the

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enemy deliberately, and fully convinced to the superiority of his radar, threw into the night combat a considerable number of large ships in accordance with the principles of a daylight engagement. He sought combat in our own coastal zone, being of the opinion that the German Air Force, which he regarded anyway as not decisive because of its numerical weakness, embodied no threat considering the visibility conditions prevailing in the north at that time.

The weak German Air reconnaissance was unable to detect the positions of the enemy forces in time, so the latter were able to cut the SCHARNHORST off from her base, encircle and destroy her.

On the other hand the high expenditure of enemy forces proves that he considered this single German battleship a great threat, and makes it clear why the enemy is making such determined efforts to eliminate the last large German battleships, since this would bring about a fundamental change in the strategic situation at sea.

The Naval Staff draws the following conclusions from this situation:

"1. The most urgent necessity as a condition for our own operations is the possession of radar gear which is at least equal to that of the enemy so that our forces will be able to use their weapons in defense and attack in the same way as the enemy.

The radar problem has thus gained the same importance for surface forces as in submarine warfare.

2. Even with the possession of efficient radar gear the complete enemy superiority in the combat field can only be contested by the highest possible number of ships in order to be able to distract the enemy, attack him from different directions, and surprise him.

It is therefore necessary to transfer all vessels at all suitable as warships to reinforce the naval forces in the Northern area, and to increase their number by every means possible.

With the number of ships increased and equipped with highly efficient radar sets, the Fleet Task Force will be able to resume the attack on the northern route over which the vital supplies for the relief of the eastern front are preceding to Russia.

Operations by the Task Force, which would be unavoidable in case of an enemy landing in the northern area, will always offer incomparably less prospect of success than will be able to shadow and eliminate our ships, having the greatly superior forces with which to do it."

Final judgement on the SCHARNHORST can only be passed when

the circumstances of the operation - as far as they can ever be known - are known, and have been evaluated.

The Commander in Chief, Navy issued the following order which is to be made known to all members of the Navy immediately:

"I. During Christmas the Fleet Task Force under the Command of Rear Admiral Bey, consisting of the SCHARNHORST, and five destroyers under the Commander of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla operated against an enemy convoy bound for Russia in the Barents Sea. Because this convoy represented decisive help to the Russians in weapons and food, the situation as a whole made operations by the Task Force inevitable, in order to bring relief to the Army in their decisive struggle in the east, and to thereby fulfil the task for which it existed.

2. The conditions for the battle were favorable, because:

a. air reconnaissance had detected only proportionately weak escort of light naval forces with the convoy and

b. there existed the possibility that the enemy could be surprised, since he had succeeded only shortly beforehand in running two other convoys unmolested to northern Russia. The restricted use of guns and torpedoes imposed by the weather also hindered the enemy light naval forces, and promised advantage to the battleship in the use of her superior guns.

3. On the morning of 26 Dec. the SCHARNHORST, which lay ahead of the convoy, made contact with the escort forces. In the course of action, during which the enemy fired on radar directions from the cruisers, a heavy enemy unit intervened at about 1200 hours.

According to orders previously received, the battleship then withdrew from action and made for the southeast at high speed. The enemy succeeded in shadowing the ship continuously by radar in bringing up further heavy naval forces at about 1600. The strong concentration of enemy naval forces then assembled might have been connected with a return convoy proceeding at the same time from Russia to the west, and of which nothing was known.

Encircled by greatly superior enemy forces the SCHARNHORST sank at about 1930, heroically fighting until the last shell was fired.

4. The most serious fact arising from the operation is that with his radar the enemy was able to detect the battleship at a distance of more than 30 miles, to maintain contact with her and fire on her out of sight from a range of more than 180 hectometers. The conclusions to be drawn from this are obvious.

5. The five destroyers were ordered to withdraw and entered their bases during the night. Details of the losses inflicted on the enemy are not yet known.

6. The battleship SCHARNHORST sank with her ensign flying in fulfillment of her strategic task; her heroic fight will be an example to the Navy and her fighting spirit a constant inspiration in the future.

Berlin, 27 Dec. 1943.

Commander in Chief, Navy
Doenitz
Admiral of the Fleet."

For copy 1/Skl 53283/43 geh. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a, "Operation Scharnhorst".

II. The Submarine Division, Naval Staff reports:

"I. The Commander in Chief, Navy ordered the number of boats in Northern Waters to be increased to 24. The submarines U "472" (v. Forstner), U "990" (Nordheimer) and U "278" (Franze) are to be equipped by the 5th Submarine Flotilla for operations in Northern Waters as quickly as possible. (Anti-aircraft armament: No. 3.7 cm guns but quadruple mounting). The deadline for their operational readiness must be given priority over that of the Atlantic boats and reported.

2. After completion of the Communications Experimental Command trials the submarine U "965" is to be transferred to the Commander, Submarines, Norway for assignment in Northern Waters. Equipment will be handled by the Commander, Submarines, Norway.

3. Two further type VII C boats are to be detached by the Commanding Admiral, Submarines for operations in Northern Waters (anti-aircraft-armament as under I.) Operational readiness is to be accelerated, and the earliest possible deadline as well as the number of the boats are to be reported.

4. Assignment of the above boats to the flotillas in Northern Waters in accordance with orders from Commanding Admiral, Submarines.

5. Sailing orders applicable to paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 will be given Group North/Fleet."

III. Naval Intelligence Division informed the supreme operations Staffs of the Navy on the enemy situation as follows:

I. West Area:

The new organization in the command of the Anglo-American troops assembled in Great Britain for the invasion, by the appointment of Eisenhower as the Commander in Chief,

and Montgomery as the Commander in Chief of the British Army Group, means a further step towards the completion of preparations for the invasion, and the transfer of the focal point of future operations from the Mediterranean to the western area. In the view of foreign armies, West the British Army Group subordinate to Montgomery indicates that a commitment of strong American forces is also to be expected; for the establishment of these forces considerable reinforcements from the United States can be expected in addition to the forces already stationed in Great Britain (5-6 Infantry Divisions, 1-2 Armored Divisions, 1 Parachute Division).

British troops are presumed to be in the south and southeast, American forces in southwest England. It would be possible for further U. S. forces to be concentrated in Northern Ireland and in the harbors in the west of England, possibly also in the United States for transfer direct to the beach-heads.

As regards the Allied air forces, the appointment of the U. S. General Spaatz as Commander in Chief of the U. S. Strategic Bombing Force against Germany probably includes the formations in Great Britain and in the Mediterranean. According to the Air Force, Operations Staff, the appointment of a Commander in Chief of short-range bomber formations on the British mainland is to be expected; it seems to be possible that the British Air Chief Marshal Tedder (until now Commander in Chief, Mediterranean) who is considered the originator of the present methods of combined operation between the Army and Air Force will be given this task.

2. Mediterranean Area:

The Supreme Allied Command in the Mediterranean, which has now become purely British after the appointment of the British General Maitland - Wilson (until then Eastern Mediterranean) as the successor to Eisenhower, retaining the British General Alexander as Commander in Chief, Allied Armies in Italy, makes it appear possible that in the future this area will be considered as a predominately British theater of war. The non-arrival of any quantity of supplies seems to point in the same direction.

It remains to be seen whether the appointment of Wilson will also result in more active warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean.

3. Invasion Intentions in the Mediterranean:

Reports concerning landing intentions on the south coast of France which have been appearing in recent news were not confirmed by our air and radio reconnaissance. The island of Corsica, which was mentioned as the jumping-off base, is only weakly occupied with troops (mainly one incomplete French infantry division), and no concentrations of landing craft worth mentioning were observed.

According to a report from the Liaison Intelligence, Operations Staff, German Air Force, the completion of the airfields on Corsica and Sardinia is going ahead only slowly; it seems that for the time being the fields are intended only for fighter and bomber formations against Italian land objectives; the organization is not yet considered adequate for the support of a landing operation on a large-scale.

The above-mentioned reports on an invasion give rise to the suspicion that they were disseminated by the enemy in order to bind the German forces on the Ligurian coast."

Situation 27 Dec.

I. War In Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence at 2359 the Admiralty transmitted the position of an unknown Three-Island-Type ship of 6,000 BRT in ?, course 120 degrees, speed 10 knots to Commander in Chief, Western Approaches and Rear Admiral, Iceland. The ship was described as suspicious, and an air patrol laid on.

Judging by the authorities addressed there exists the possibility that the ALSTERUFER was the ship in question. The time of the sighting is unknown.

2. Own Situation:

In accordance with the decision of the Chief, Naval Staff, that one of the next blockade-runners bound for Europe is to attempt to break through the Denmark Strait, the Naval Staff, Operations Division informed Group North/Fleet of this intention which is to be carried out by the motor vessel WESERLAND (ex ERMLAND). According to present dead-reckoning with a speed of 10-11 knots the ship ought to be off Cape Farvel on about 22 Jan.

The ship will be supplied with the navigational equipment necessary for Northern Waters and Norway by submarine, which will probably have to leave as early as the first or second week of January. The order for the rendezvous with the ship which is to be issued by the Group must be submitted to Operations Division, Naval Staff by mid-January at the latest, so that it can be radioed to the ship by installments.

The Naval Staff will retain command of the ship as far as the eastern approach to the Denmark Strait. It is not intended to have submarines pass through the Denmark Strait beforehand, in order to avoid drawing attention to the attention to that area. The number of planes engaged on meteorological reconnaissance will be increased as gradually and unnoticeably as possible from the midst of next month.

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The Naval Liaison Officer attached to the German Air Force, Operations Staff was likewise informed.

The submarine Division, Naval Staff was asked for a proposal as to where and when a submarine might deliver the navigational data to the WESERLAND and when this boat should leave. The WESERLAND is expected in DR or DA between 11 and 13 Jan. 1944 and in the southern part of AK by 19/20 Jan.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty four planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay. In the course of the day eleven locations of British vessels were reported in the reconnaissance area. At 2035 radio intelligence intercepted a report from a plane on a location in BE 5959.

At 1421 our air reconnaissance sighted 8 - 10 merchant ships south of Portland, course 300 degrees.

2. Own Situation:

Subject: BERNAU:

The Chief, Naval Staff sent the following teletype to the 4th Escort Division for delivery to the Captain of the BERNAU, copy to Group West, Naval Liaison Officer, Bordeaux:

"I welcome the BERNAU home and express my special acknowledgement to the captain and crew for their achievement which will be of decisive value to the war. In appreciation of your services, above all in recognition of previous enemy patrols, I award the Iron Cross, first and second class, to Captain Hellmann."

At 1920 Group West reported that the unloading of the BERNAU began in the afternoon. For the time being the calking of the leak in the bottom of the ship is impossible. It is still uncertain whether the ship can be refloated by lightening and pumping. Everything is being done to achieve this.

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

At 1020 Group West informed the TRAVE that FW 200's, JU 290's and one BV 222 took off for reconnaissance.

At 1025 Group West warned the TRAVE that the objectives detected in BD 6610 on 26 Dec. were probably part of a convoy, but did not threaten the TRAVE as it was sailing west of her. At 1028 the TRAVE reported by short signal:

Channel Coast:

On 26 Dec. one mine was cleared off Cherbourg. The transfer of the 5th Destroyer Flotilla from Le Havre to Cherbourg and the transfer of the steamer MUENSTERLAND from Le Havre to Dieppe is intended during the night of 27 Dec. So far both movements have proceeded without event.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.I. North Sea.

The convoy "474" Elbe -Hook started at 1900 consisting of five steamers.

One mine was cleared off Schiermonikoog and one near Heligoland.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Nine planes were detected operating over the North Sea.

One British vessel was located by Kirkenes at 1023 in 35 degrees and at 1716 in 50 degrees.

At 1920 our air reconnaissance reported the renewed detection of a convoy in 27 degrees East 6539 (AC 19 left center).

Radio intelligence observed the exchange of urgent tactical radiograms between the British radio station at Murmansk and the Home Fleet, as well as between the Russian radio station at Polyarno and Russian submarines and naval forces.

Own Situation:

The submarine chase in Bokn Fjord was broken off after no success had been achieved.

At 1110 eight enemy planes attacked the northbound convoy of the tanker WOERTH between Egersund and Stavanger and subsequently a southbound convoy south of Stavanger. The personnel suffered casualties as a result of machine-gun fire. One of the attacking planes was shot down. One BV 138 was lost.

Thirty four ships were escorted north, 15 ships south. Ten ships remained lying in harbor owing to the lack of escorts.

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Group North/Fleet ordered the Commander of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla Captain Johannesson to attend to the duties of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force.

Group "Eisenhart" was established in patrol line from AC 6177 to 5858 for further operations against the PQ convoy.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

Nothing to report.

V. Merchant Shipping.

In connection with the shelling of the steamer NICOLINE MAERSK on 24 Dec, off the south coast of France, the Minister of Economics informed the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping that according to his view, the arming of vessels in Mediterranean shipping which are engaged in the transport of Spanish iron ore, is absolutely necessary.

To this the Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Minister of Economics and the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping that the arming of all ships engaged in the Spanish-Levante shipping had been ordered by the Naval Staff at the beginning of December. The Naval Staff added, however, that this measure does not guarantee efficient protection against every kind of enemy action, as the attack by a British destroyer on the NICOLINE MAERSK proves, but that the continuation of such attacks must be expected. The Naval Staff therefore considers it advisable to shift as much of the transport concerned as possible to the land route.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

Nothing to report.

VII. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

Only minor enemy forces were reported over occupied western territory. No attacks were made.

2. German Reich Territory:

No air activity was reported.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

A total of about 300 planes, concentrating on the right wing, were on operation in the Italian front area.

Railway installations in the area of Genoa as well as Civitavecchia were subjected to attacks.

In the area of Air Force Command Southeast 14 planes were observed by day and four planes by night, some of them engaged in armed reconnaissance over the Aegean. One enemy PT boat was sunk by our fighters in the Straits of Kerch.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area of Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

According to an intelligence report the WARSPITE is scheduled to leave Gibraltar for Philadelphia at the end of December or beginning of January.

Own Situation:

In the area of Nice a harbor defense boat was attacked by enemy planes with machine guns and suffered casualties.

2. Area of the German Naval Command, Italy:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

The minelayer DWARS LAEUFER carried out the mine-laying operation south of Elba during the night of 26 Dec. according to plan.

The escort service was hindered by the weather.

During the attack by enemy fighter-bombers on Benedetto on the afternoon of 26 Dec. one enemy plane was shot down by our naval anti-aircraft artillery.

3. Area of Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

During the night of 26 Dec. the PT boats S "55" and "36" were sent out to attack escaping partisans. The boats partially carried out their task and re-entered Cattaro at 0430. No operations are intended during the night of 27 Dec.

The three "TA" torpedo boats are out of action. Otherwise there are no special reports.

b. Aegean Sea:

During the enemy air raid on Stampalia on 26 Dec. two of the attacking planes were shot down by the battery Stampalia.

According to a report from the Assault Division Rhodes an enemy naval vessel tried to enter the harbor of Pigadia (Skarpantos) on the evening of 26 Dec. The attempt was frustrated.

c. Black Sea:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

An enemy submarine fired two torpedoes into the harbor of Ivanbaba, which ran ashore outside the PT boat harbor and did not explode. A submarine hunt by our PT boats was unsuccessful.

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At 1745 the sub-chasers UJ "101" and "106" were attacked by an enemy submarine with torpedoes west of Eupatoria. Two explosions occurred, at 150 and 75 m respectively, in front of the bow of the sub-chaser UJ "106".

The naval artillery lighter MAL "4", which was damaged off Pervomaisk, was towed into Otchakov.

During the enemy air attack on two sub-chasers southwest of Eupatoria in the morning, two enemy planes were shot down by our fighters. There are no special reports from the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch on the night of 26 Dec.

IX. Situatikn East Asia.

Nothing to report.

Items of Political Importance.

On Roosevelt's suggestion the U. S. government has taken over control of the railroads. The CIO Labor Union has ordered the approximately 150,000 steel workers at present on strike to resume work.

According to Reuter the British Air Chief Marshal Tedder has been appointed Deputy Supreme Commander under General Eisenhower. In the Mediterranean, too, a Commander in Chief, Middle East has been established who will be General Paget under General Maitland Wilson. The Mediterranean Command covers the area from Gibraltar to Cyprus including the coast of North Africa.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

"SCHARNHORST": Following an order by telephone from the Chief, Naval Staff on 26 Dec. the Commanding Admiral, Group North, Commander in Chief, Fleet submitted his review of the operation on 25/26 Dec. 1943 to the Chief, Naval Staff. For copy of the teletype as per 1/Skl 4049/43 Gkdos. Chefs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a. "Operation SCHARNHORST". Admiral Schniewind stresses the inadequacy of our air reconnaissance and the superior enemy radar and considers that the result of the SCHARNHORST operation does not fundamentally change our valuation of the heavy battleship or the heavy unit as such:

"It has again been confirmed that the British battleships are, and must still be the main support of enemy naval strategy simply because on the opposite side there are also heavy units. In decisive situations they tip the balance. If we completely renounce our threat to the enemy supply routes and attacks when conditions are favorable, we allow the enemy free play for his surface forces, in particular for his heavy ships, and there will no longer be any binding effect. This might result in a grave and increased burden in other theaters both in and outside Europe during future enemy operations."

The 4th Destroyer Flotilla completed the short report dated 27 Dec. as follows:

"I. While returning independently from grid square 4150 AC to point L I at about 1800 the destroyer Z "33" fired a quadruple fan at what was presumably a straggler

what was presumably a straggler in grid square 4494 AB. The torpedoes were fired in a heavy beam and sea and swell, there were disorders in the initial dive and gyroscope, and they missed their target.

2. According to the operational orders from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force the attack on the convoy by the whole Task Force intended at about 1000. After engagement of the SCHARNHORST with an enemy cruiser at 0924, it was supposed that the Commanding Admiral, Task Force intended to engage against the less protected convoy. From the order of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force to the 4th Destroyer Flotilla, for a report on the situation, it can be concluded that at that time the Commanding Admiral already expected the destroyers to have contacted the convoy. The reasons for the turning of the reconnaissance line on to a northeasterly course at high speed are obscure; it is supposed that the Commanding Admiral, Task Force hoped to find chances of success in that direction which were not later confirmed. Then he decided, considering the too far advanced hour, to withdraw and to have the destroyers operate alone against the convoy sighted by the submarine LEUBSEN. It is striking that despite the occasional interruption of radio silence, the Commanding Admiral, Task Force did not communicate his intentions to the Flotilla; certainly the reception was extraordinarily bad and unreliable as a result of the heavy sea and the sea-sickness of the radio operators. It is, however, considered impossible that every one of the five destroyers could have missed a radiogram to this effect. The presumable reasons for breaking off the destroyer operation are mentioned in "Enemy Situation SCHARNHORST" according to which on the one hand the destroyer operation was considered a wild goose chase, and on the other hand support of the SCHARNHORST seemed to be impracticable in view of the existing weather conditions and the great range. Since the barometer was steadily rising the Flotilla erroneously counted on an improvement in the weather, while the Commanding Admiral ordered the withdrawal of the destroyers, probably on the basis of the meteorological weather forecast.

3. The Flotilla was not informed of the location from the air of a suspicious vessel about 60 miles off Loppa until about 2000, so that the dangerous position of the Flotilla, which was separated from the coast by enemy forces, was not recognized earlier; the SCHARNHORST was supposed to be far off to the north.

4. The High Command, Navy Administrative Staff is requested to relieve the next-of-kin of the destroyer crew of anxiety by a press announcement, as the rest of the units in Northern Waters did not suffer any casualties."

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Situation 28 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Attache, Tokyo transmitted the BOGOTA's plans in connection with the rendezvous with the KIEFER. The Naval Staff agreed and will probably not issue any further directives on the matter.

The BOGOTA was informed to this effect in radiogram 1035 by Operations Division, Naval Staff.

The Submarine Division, Naval Staff reports in reply to the inquiry regarding the WESERLAND (see War Diary 27 Dec.) that DB or DF cannot be reached in time and that the passage to the southern half of AK will take about 18 days.

The Chief, Naval Staff has therefore decided that the delivery of the chart equipment is to be carried out on 19/20 Jan. in AK 70.

The Submarine Division, Naval Staff has been informed to this effect.

II. Situation East Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Sixty six planes and six crash planes were detected operating in the outer Bay of Biscay. Eight locations of British vessels were made in the reconnaissance area in the course of the day.

From 0927 radio intelligence picked up shadowing reports of our destroyers and torpedo boats, which confirmed that these vessels were proceeding according to plan. At 1335 from BE 6696 the British vessel IMA reported sighting the enemy in 240 degrees, range 12.5 miles, at 1342 from BE 6696 four destroyers on bearing 230 degrees, range 11 miles, course 130 degrees. IMA reported own position in BE 6378. At 1611 one British vessel was located in BE 4460. At 1419 a plane of the 19th Group reported an air combat with an FW 200 without mentioning the position. At 1521 the vessel IMA sent out a tactical message to Cleethorpes and was located at 1455 in BE 6696 and at 1556 in BF 4733.

At 1808 Plymouth sent out a tactical message to IMA and HAF (cruiser of the FIJI class), for information to IJI. At 1830 a plane reported six destroyers in BE 6398 and at 2024 two destroyers in BF 4842 course 210 degrees, speed 25 knots.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

At 0305 Group West informed the TRAVE that planes of types FW 200, He 177, Ju 290 and Ju 88 would be sent out.

At 0945 the 8th Destroyer Flotilla and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla joined up, reached the rendezvous and were detected by enemy reconnaissance.

Since the TRAVE was not encountered, the 8th Destroyer Flotilla steered to meet the ship from BE 6672 on course 285 degrees, speed 17 knots until 1000. The TRAVE was informed of this at 1125.

At 1208 Group West ordered the TRAVE to report her position.

If no answer was received by 1400 the flotillas were to return.

At 1525 Air Commander, Atlantic transmitted a preliminary report according to which his reconnaissance reported an engagement between 2 cruisers and 4 of our destroyers or torpedo boats in BE 66.

Evidently the vessels IMA and HAF located by our radio intelligence were involved. If no stronger forces than these two cruisers were involved a favorable development of the situation for our own forces could be expected. However the TRAVE's position became the subject of considerable anxiety. Should the order from Group West to report her position remain unanswered, a successful breakthrough could no longer be expected considering the enemy situation since the afternoon of 27 Dec., and certainly not should the destroyers and torpedo boats no longer be able to remain at their rendezvous position.

At 1520 Group West reported that at 1458 the destroyer Z "27" was out of control in BE 6938.

At 1524 the destroyer Z "23" reported: "Am attempting to withdraw westward; am being pursued by two cruisers in BE 6923."

At 1615 the Chief, Naval Staff called the Air Commander, Atlantic personally and asked for every possible support for our forces in the Bay of Biscay, since the situation was grave. The Air Commander was of the same opinion and reported that 16 He 177's with "Kehl" instruments had been sent out.

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Nine of these planes broke off operations because of the darkness, six planes did not find their target, one plane reported a miss on a cruiser in the combat zone and one He 177 failed to return.

At 1650 the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff received the confirmation from the Chief, Submarine Division, Naval Staff that the submarines were operating against the enemy convoy RANGE, which according to radio intelligence was allegedly detected in BE 6378, but that at best four boats were available. The boats were allowed to attack only if there were at least two transports proceeding together with their escort. After the radio intelligence report had proved to be a mistake in translation, the submarines were sent out to the destroyer Z "27" which was out of control.

At 1700 Group West received instructions regarding the order to all naval forces stating that attacks on all submarines were prohibited with immediate effect.

At 1600 the destroyer Z "23" reported a cruiser and a destroyer in BE 6961. From it Group West concluded that there was another group than that of the two cruisers previously reported involved. At 1618 the destroyer Z "23" reported:

"I am in BE 6915 lower right corner, course 240 degrees, 24 knots with the torpedo boat T "22". Am trying to withdraw and to break through near Cape Villano during the night by turning to southwest."

Group West agreed to this proposal, The inquiry of the destroyers Z "23" for the course of the enemy cruisers could not be answered by the Group.

At 1835 Group West reported the following situation:

1. No reports received from the destroyer Z "27" since 1459.

2. At 1530 the destroyers Z "32", "37", and "24" gave up their attempt to pick up the destroyer Z "27". At 1700 the destroyers Z "32" and Z "37" were in BF 4719 lower left corner; for the time being the position of the destroyer Z "24" is obscure.

3. According to a shadowing report the destroyer Z "23" and the torpedo boat T "22" were in about BE 6865, course 85 degrees at 1715.

4. The 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was dismissed eastwards at 1533.

5. The cruiser, one destroyer in BE 6961, course southwest at 1600.

At 1910 the Submarine Div. reported that four

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submarines were detached as Group "Hela" in order to render assistance to the destroyer Z "27", and that they were about 150 miles off.

At 2020 Group West transmitted the following review on the situation as it was at 1930:

1. The Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla reported his position at 1800: destroyer Z "24", torpedo boats T "23", "24" and "27" are in BF 4763, course 75 degrees, 24 knots; an enemy plane is shadowing the group.

2. The position of torpedo boats T "25" and T "26" is unknown. The Group has inquired about it.

3. The destroyer Z "32" reported that at 1848 in BF 4763 she definitely abandoned the attempt to render assistance to the destroyer having been driven off by the cruisers, and owing to the darkness and continuous air attacks. Course east, Maximum speed.

4. At 1825 our air reconnaissance lost contact with the enemy. The last report of the enemy stated position in about BF 4410 without reference to number, type or course. Thus it seems that the attack by the He 177's failed. For the time being the enemy situation is not known to the Group. At 1900 our air reconnaissance reported two destroyers, course west, 15 knots in BE 6630. (According to the view of the Group these were probably cruisers.)

The Naval Staff is unable to gain a clear picture from the reports on hand. Two cruisers, three cruisers at best, and one destroyer were observed for certain on the enemy side. Nothing is known of successes on our side. The fate of the destroyer Z "27" seems to be sealed, that of the torpedo boats T "25" and "26" is obscure. The arrival of the TRAVE can no longer be counted on. As far as it can be seen now the balance of the day is completely unsatisfactory. However, further reports are still to be expected.

Atlantic Coast:

Five submarines were escorted in. With regard to the unloading of the BERNAU Group West reported that on 28 Dec. 7470 tons of Caoutchouc were unloaded despite the continuing unfavorable weather.

Channel Coast:

The 5th Destroyer Flotilla consisting of four boats put into Cherbourg as planned. The steamer MUENSTERLAND is being transferred from Le Havre to Dieppe escorted by 21 escort vessels.

In the early hours of the morning an attempted commando operation against Sark was reported. One British soldier was found in the minefield.

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The minesweeper M "3634" hit a mine off Calais, she was taken in tow and is being taken to Calais.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

The convoy "474" Elbe-Hook was carried out. Mine-exploding vessel "32" transferred from the Hook to Boulogne without special event. On 27 Dec. altogether 43,280 BRT, and on 28 Dec. 49,302 BRT were escorted by our convoy service.

Two mines were cleared north of Borkum. One drifter sank southwest of Ymuiden after striking a mine. Three convoys totalling about 11,000 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Zee and in Zeeland waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Over the north sea seven planes were detected in the morning and three planes in the afternoon. On 27 Dec. weak air reconnaissance was observed in the Vardoe area.

Our air reconnaissance for the convoy was carried out from 0939 to 2032. At 1523 an objective was located in 37 degrees East 7445, and at 1705 light signals were sighted in 27 degrees East 5349, and at 1545 a convoy was located by radar in 27 degrees East 6539.

At 2046 on 28 Dec. all Russian destroyers at sea and at 2150 all naval forces received urgent radiograms from Polyarno.

Own Situation:

The motor minesweeper R "64" sank south of Honningvaag after striking a mine. The area was closed because of suspicion of mines.

At 1205 a northbound convoy consisting of two steamers and one tanker escorted by one minesweeper, one patrol boat and two sub-chasers was attacked by two enemy submarines north of Stadlandet. The steamer OLDENBURG received two torpedo hits and sank. Seventy four survivors were brought to Aalesund.

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At 1355 the minelaying vessel M "433" was unsuccessfully bombed and machine-gunned by eight enemy planes near Haugsholm. Nineteen ships were escorted north, ten south. Altogether 37 ships remained lying in harbor owing to the lack of escorts.

At 2213 the submarine U "957" temporarily contacted a group of vessels in AC 5637. The boat fired two Zaunkoenig torpedoes at two fast units which were using infra-red location gear, and heard three explosions. It was fired on and forced to submerge.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from the Naval Attache in Stockholm, a British transport PT boat put into Lysekil and intends to leave the harbor the same day. According to an intelligence report the plan to attempt a breakthrough with the DICTO and the LIONEL has been given up, since most of the ball-bearings there have been shipped by British transport PT boats already.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Reich Commissioner for Merchant Shipping sent in a report from his plenipotentiary in Greece dated 17 Dec. to Reichsleiter Bormann to be brought forward for discussion with the Fuehrer, and setn a copy of the report to the Commander in Chief, Navy.

The report describes the sea transport and supply situation in the Aegean as extraordinarily grave, opposes the transfer of shipping from the Aegean to the Black Sea and demands the immediate remedying of these conditions by the lowering of high repair quota for large and small ships; also that small ships available in other areas and the peniches in the Aegean be brought up as quickly as possible, the latter on the assumption that most of the small vessels can be employed without escort. In addition to this the report demands the energetic execution of a program for the construction of small ships, with the necessary material given highest priority and all financial considerations set aside.

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The Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff invited Group South and Admiral Aegean to make their comments on this report. The development of the situation as described by the Reich Commissioner for Merchant Shipping was foreseen by the Naval Staff.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

So far there are no reports on the result of the efforts of our submarines to assist the destroyer Z "27" which was lost on BE 6938.

Group "Ruegen" was disposed in AL in seven small patrol lines of three boats each.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

For operations in the Bay of Biscay see situation West Area.

Single flights over the coast and no special combat activity were reported from occupied western territory, One Spitfire was shot down.

2. German Reich Territory:

Between 1820 and 1925 about 15-20 enemy planes dropped 28 high-explosives on Duisburg, Duesseldorf, Moers and Cologne.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

The 2nd Air Force carried out reconnaissance activity. The enemy attacked harbors and amrshalling yards at Rimini, the railway bridge at Castiglione, the harbor of Civitavecchia and a convoy off this harbor, also various airfields in the Italian area.

During the attack on the airfield of Vicenza 20 Liberators were shot down by fighters and two by anti-aircraft artillery; four of our fighters are missing.

In the area of Air Force Command Southeast one auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk off Kythera by five enemy planes.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.I. Area of Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

On 26 Dec. one cruiser of each of the classes CAIRO, DELHI, AURORA, FIJI as well as one WARSPITE still in the dock, were observed in Gibraltar. At 0955 the same day one DEVONSHIRE class cruiser on westerly course, and at 1005 two transports and three destroyers on same course were abreast of Tangier.

At 0810 on 28 Dec. four freighters and two sub-chasers passed Tangier in an easterly direction. At 0900 one vessel, probably an auxiliary cruiser and seven freighters coming from the Mediterranean were sighted off Ceuta. A convoy consisting of 41 freighters, eight tankers, escorted by three destroyers, two escorts and one submarine probably GUS "27" passed the Straits of Gibraltar heading for the Atlantic. A further convoy consisting of 20 steamers and eight escort vessels was observed during the night of 28 Dec., likewise course west.

Own Situation:

At 0948 the steamer CHISONE (6,168 BRT) was torpedoed by an enemy submarine in CJ 1448. The steamer was able to reach Toulon under its own steam. So far the submarine hunt has been without results owing to the low number of vessels able to operate.

2. Area of German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance detected two northeastbound PT boats in the north part of the Bonifacio Strait. One tanker, three freighters and four small vessels were in Ajaccio. Six freighters, probably one submarine and, for the first time, five PT boats were observed in Cagliari. Photographic reconnaissance of Catania revealed the presence of four freighters and some small craft. According to rough evaluation two destroyers, several small war vessels and about 32 merchant ships and transports totalling 275,000 BRT were lying in Augusta. Several small naval vessels, one LCT 250, as well as freighters and transports totalling 55,000 BRT were detected in Syracuse.

According to radio intelligence one UK convoy heading for the west was observed in the Malta area in the evening.

Own Situation:

On the morning of 25 Dec. naval anti-aircraft shot down one plane during an attack by enemy fighter-bombers on Benedetto. Slight damage was caused in the harbor of Civitavecchia as the result of a fighter-bomber attack. One steamer was set on fire.

Motor coaster traffic off the east coast has further delayed by the weather. The submarines U "73" and "503" did not reply to the repeated demands to report their position. In the western Mediterranean the submarine U "380" is in position in CH 7542 and U "642" in CJ 80. The submarine U "565" put into Salamis and U "596" into Pola.

3. Area of Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

During the night of 26 Dec. the PT boats S "36" and "55" denting during the approach and return passage owing to wind force 7-8 and sea force 5-6 in the open sea.

A raid by the PT boats S "36" and "55" on the east coast of Italy with subsequent bombardment of the harbor of Koriza on Lissa at dawn is scheduled for the night of 28 Dec.

The strategic concentration of war and auxiliary vessels in the assembly areas for operation "Herbstgewitter 3" has begun.

b. Aegean Sea:

On the afternoon of 27 Dec. one auxiliary sailing vessel was attacked by two U. S. Planes with bombs and machine-guns near Rhodes. The vessel was slightly damaged. Two of the anti-aircraft personnel were wounded.

c. Black Sea:

The convoy service Constanta - Sevastopol was carried out as planned. One tanker had to be towed in from her position 90 miles west of Sevastopol owing to the breakdown of both engines. Two sub-chasers and ship "19" were sent out in order to render assistance and to escort her home.

Four naval landing craft laden with eight assault guns and four anti-aircraft guns from Odessa put into AK Mechet.

One crane of 40 tons, one small dredger and one elevator were transported to Otchakow. During the night of 28 Dec. the patrol line in the south part of the Straits of Kerch was manned by three naval landing craft.

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XI. Situation in East Asia.

According to the report from the Japanese Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Naval Staff, the Americans have stationed about 200 bombers and three or four aircraft carriers on the Gilbert- and Ellis Islands.

The Americans have established two airfields at the landing place at Torokina (Bougainville) with a complement of about 70 fighters. The strength of the enemy air forces in the Solomon Island area was estimated to be about 2,200 machines at the end of November.

Of late the enemy has been launching plane and submarine attacks from the Banda Sea against West New Guinea.

In the period July to November the American Air Force sank 28,500 BRT and damaged 83,500 BRT of Japanese shipping in Chinese coastal waters.

Japanese circles estimate that a monthly quota of 4,500-5,000 tons of goods is being transported by air from India to China.

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Items of Political Importance.

As regards the appointment of military Commanders in Chief in the European theater of war the "Times" writes: "The appointment of such outstanding officers to the fortress of the British Isles is a clear announcement that the last phase of the preparations has begun. It is important that the war against Germany in 1944 is carried out in accordance with a single clear-cut plan and that the unconditional surrender of the enemy is achieved before the end of the year. An unconditional surrender, however, can only be achieved by the destruction of the entire fighting potential of the enemy.

According to Reuter, Roosevelt stated that the conferences in Cairo and Teheran had only reached the stage of fundamental discussions.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Army Situation:

Extraordinarily heavy defensive fighting is taking place in the area of Zhitomir and Korosten. Positions in the area of Vitebsk were held.

Special Items:

"SCHARNHORST":

The British Admiralty reported as follows:

"The British force consisted of two groups - one under the command of Admiral Fraser with the battleship DUKE OF YORK, the cruiser JAMICICA and four destroyers, the other of the cruisers BELFAST, NORFOLK and SHEFFIELD. The cruiser squadron was escorting the convoy in a position southeast of Bear Island, when it contacted the SCHARNHORST, which approached the convoy at a speed of 28 knots. The convoy was diverted to the north. The cruisers opened fire, whereupon the SCHARNHORST turned away from the convoy. Several hours later the SCHARNHORST again tried to approach the convoy; she was again engaged and in the course of the action the NORFOLK received a hit aft. The SCHARNHORST turned off to the south, pursued by the British cruisers and destroyers, who reported the position of the ship to the DUKE OF YORK. At 1615 the DUKE OF YORK came into contact with the SCHARNHORST.

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The British battleship altered her course to southeast, in order to be able to fire a full broadside at the enemy, and soon scored a hit. Endeavouring to evade the concentrically advancing forces the SCHARNHORST again turned north; a few minutes later she altered her course again and sailed in easterly direction with maximum speed. The British units took up the pursuit. There existed the danger that the SCHARNHORST would succeed in eluding the British flagship on account of her superior speed. The destroyers SAVAGE, SAUMAREZ and SCORPION turned off in order to attack with torpedoes. As a result the SCHARNHORST was probably hit by three torpedoes, reducing her speed and enabling the DUKE OF YORK to draw up and to attack afresh. Soon afterwards the SCHARNHORST was seen in flames, and lying almost stopped. After the last torpedo attack by the cruiser JAMAICA and the SCHARNHORST sank at 1945 on 26 Dec. in a position about 60 miles northeast of North Cape. A few survivors were picked up. The ships NORFOLK and SAUMAREZ suffered a few casualties and slight damage.

For verbatim report see "Operation SCHARNHORST" (Appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. IIa).

On the whole the report confirms the progress of the action as it had been supposed by the Naval Staff on the basis of the data available. There still remains the possibility that the data as regards the strength of the British forces- in view of the fact they were under the command of Commander in Chief, Fleet is incomplete. At any rate the report now raises the question of how to judge the tactical conduct of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force from the moment of the first encounter with the enemy until the decision to withdraw from action. It will probably be impossible to clear the matter up completely, unless any persons were saved who are able to give authentic information. At any rate the enemy report clearly reveals that the operation was not successful. The convoy remained completely unscathed, the escort forces did not suffer serious casualties or losses. Unfortunately it is a fact that the battleship did not penetrate the cruiser escort which was inferior in armament, and she did not reach the ultimate target. The reasons which prevented Rear Admiral Bey from so doing must certainly have been coercive. The job of discovering them so that they will be of use in the future is a task which must be tackled without reservation. A complete report of the progress of the operation on the basis of the latest data is being prepared by the Operations Division, Naval Staff.

Situation 29 Dec:

I. War In Foreign Waters,

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.I. Enemy Situation:

Thirty three planes detected operating over the outer Bay of Biscay. The activity decreased considerably after 1700. In the morning the planes reported one of our destroyers in BF 7689 and one in 7942 on northeast and easterly courses, and in the afternoon at 1505 and 1605 again one of our own destroyers in BF 8196, BF 8824 and BF 8597 on easterly courses with a speed of 20, 26 and 30 knots respectively. At 1837 one of the reconnaissance planes was off Seville (CG 9232) subsequently flying to Gibraltar. Subsequent radio traffic reveals that apparently several planes of the 19th Group are using Gibraltar as a return base.

According to further radio location the U. K. - Mediterranean convoy was between 37 degrees and 38 degrees North, 17 degrees and 18 degrees West in the evening.

One British vessel was located at 1408 in BE 1981, one at 1452 in BF 2190 (inexact), one at 2111 in BC 6420, and one at 2205 in BD 3890.

Our air reconnaissance did not locate any enemy naval forces in the Bay of Biscay on 29 Dec.

2. Own Situation:Bringing in of the TRAVE:

At 0800 submarine Division, Naval Staff informed the Operations Division, Naval Staff and Group West of the order to the submarine group "Hela" to search for the destroyer Z "27". At 0145 Group West transmitted a report of the destroyer engagement in the Bay of Biscay based on the reports so far to hand and the orders issued. For copy as per 1/Sk1 4056/43 Gkdos. Chfs. see "Bringing in of the TAVE (appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.).

On the whole the report confirms the picture which the Operations Division, Naval Staff gained in the course of the 28 Dec. After the first report of the Air Commander, Atlantic on the sighting of the enemy cruisers in BE 6692 at 1355 the Group first got the impression that a mistake for our own forces was possible. Since three undecodable radiograms, probably from the 8th Destroyer Flotilla with times of origin 1310, 1323, and 1345, were received almost simultaneously the Group ordered the Flotilla to break off the operation. Unfortunately the ground stations of the Air Commander, Atlantic did not hear the report on the sighting of the enemy forces which was sent out at 1235. The report was picked up by the aircraft safety center and was considerably delayed on this account. According to further reports from the Air Commander, Atlantic the whole formation turned on to a southerly course after having contacted the enemy. The Group still

has no clear idea of the progress of the action and counted on at least 2 enemy groups when this report was made. First the combat took place on southeasterly course. At 1420 the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was ordered to attack with torpedoes. At 1458 the destroyer Z "27" went out of control.

The Commander of the Destroyer Z "32" then took over command of the main group consisting of the destroyers Z "32", "24", "37" and of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla consisting of the Torpedo boats T "24" and "27" and withdrew in an easterly direction. After the detachment of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla and destroyer Z "24" to the east, destroyers Z "32" and "37" tried to reach the destroyer Z "27". This attempt was, however, frustrated by the enemy. Destroyer Z "32" and torpedo boat T "22" tried to entice two enemy cruisers away to the east and then to haul round to the south. At any rate the Group assumes this was the intention. Of course, after the withdrawal of the Group with the destroyer Z "32" it is also possible that the enemy cruisers drove off these two vessels to the west and chased them. At any rate they succeeded in getting rid of their shadows. At that time no clear idea of the enemy situation could be gained from our radio intelligence and air reconnaissance. The air reconnaissance is supposed to have observed several enemy groups in the north. The position of torpedo boats T "25" and "26" was unknown, that of destroyer Z "23" and of torpedo boat T "22" also. The Group assumed that the destroyers Z "32" and "37" probably withdrew to the east close behind the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla.

The report then goes on to mention our air operations. Eight planes with ship's search gear were operating between 43 degrees and 49 degrees West at dawn as far as 16 degrees West, and were then to turn back. Thus the eastern part of that area had to be crossed during darkness. Owing to the breakdown of the northernmost plane, which could not be replaced until later, a great gap in the reconnaissance occurred. At any rate the reconnaissance planes in the north did not detect the cruisers approaching from the north-east while on their westerly flight, and did not reach the enemy's position until their return flight at about noon. The Group asked the Air Commander, Atlantic, to send out all He 177's to our formation at dawn, as the dawn was considered to be a particularly dangerous phase and the He 177's would be able to cover the formation for a greater part of the daylight hours. The Air Commander, Atlantic raised objections on account of the difficulty of the take-off during the night and meeting with the task force, in addition to the low cloud ceiling in the combat zone, rendering the use of "Kehl" instruments impossible. However, he complied with the Group's request by sending out four FW 200's with "Kehl" instruments which were to meet with the formation at dawn. Despite the transmitter buoy "Schwan" these planes were unable to fly in formation and were spread over the area separately. The group of He 177's was ordered to 1 hour's notice. Their engagement, which was considered useless by the Air Commander, Atlantic even after the enemy had been contacted because of the cloud ceiling of 400 m, took place at the urgent request of the Group without

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bringing success. The four FW 200's with "Kehl" instruments reported only one attack and this missed. In addition eight Ju 88's provided heavy fighter cover for the formation from 13 degrees West.

After landing the air reconnaissance reported that a hit and heavy smoke had been observed on a cruiser, and that one of our destroyers lay stopped and burning. The Group therefore considers the destroyer Z "27" lost and supposes that the interruption of the action points to further damage suffered by the enemy.

According to the view taken by the Naval Staff the He 177's unfortunately took off very late.

In further reports Group West reports on the return passage of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla as well as of the destroyers Z "32", "37" and Z "24". The 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla consisting of three boats and destroyer Z "24" entered Brest at 0900. Destroyers Z "32" and "37" were off the Gironde at 0900.

At 1000 destroyer Z "23" reported her position in BF 7941 and at 1100 the torpedo boat T "27" reported her position in BF 7698. The torpedo boat T "22" only had a small amount of oil left. The destroyer Z "23" was therefore ordered to follow the torpedo boat T "22". At 0935 the Air Commander, Atlantic reported rubber dinghies in BE 6921. The sighting plane was ordered to send out direction-finder signal for the submarines. Further positions of rubber dinghies were reported at 1000 in BE 6965 and at 1126 in BE 6933. An Irish steamer was in position BE 6921. Our planes endeavoured to lead her to the other positions as well.

In the morning at 1015 Reuter officially reported: "British ships in co-operation with planes of Coastal Command sank three German destroyers in the Bay of Biscay; further destroyers were damaged. Other planes of Coastal Command attacked the German blockade-runner which was proceeding homeward and sank her. Details are still awaited."

This reported was transmitted to Group West at 1455 in the following form:

"Three German destroyers were sunk in the Bay of Biscay. Further German units were sunk in the course of a combined operation by British warships and planes."

At 1637 a brief combat report from the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was received from Group West by teletype. For copy as per 1/Skl 43802/43 Gkds. see folder "Bringing in of the TRAVE, appendix to War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.

The report reveals:

According to observations made by radio intelligence in the course of 27 Dec. the Flotilla presumed it unlikely that the

TRAVE could have survived the day. She considers it possible that on this occasion the enemy intentionally avoided contacting our flotillas, in order to lull them into security and to be able to bring up his forces in the rear. It appears from the exchange of semaphore messages that the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla was of the same opinion. At any rate, the arrival of the TRAVE at the rendezvous was not expected, and under the most favorable conditions it was assumed she would not attempt a passage through to the east at dawn. The Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla evidently intended to advance eastwards in reconnaissance line with the 4th Destroyer Flotilla in order to take full advantage of the last possibility of finding the TRAVE. The appearance of the enemy cruisers from the northeast at 1300 came as a surprise.

The Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla ordered the destroyers to take up position in divisions (pairs). The course was 105 degrees in BE 6688. The 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was in formation M yellow ahead of the left wing of the destroyer reconnaissance line. When the enemy was sighted the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla ordered the formation to turn onto southerly course and proceeded north with the First Destroyer Division astern of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, with the manifest intention of covering the torpedo boats by the destroyers. Therewith the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla lay between the two Destroyer Divisions. The enemy was sighted by the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla in the northeast at 1314 and was reported by destroyer Z "27" as consisting of two cruisers. Wind force 7-8, sea, force 6. The Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla intended a delaying combat with torpedoes. Later it was recognized that the enemy formation consisted of one destroyer and one cruiser. At 1320 the cruiser opened fire on the rear destroyer from the limit of her range. The salvos were well placed with a spread of up to 120 m. The Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla ordered a six-fan at the limit of range should this be reached. A destroyer carried out this order at an estimated range of 16 km. On the orders of the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla the engagement was fought on mean course of about 150 degrees in an endeavour to gradually turn to the east, with the 2nd Destroyer Division as the leading formation. At 1404 the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla was ordered to advance in order to attack with torpedoes. In practice it was impossible to execute the order, because a torpedo attack in a head sea was impossible owing to the fact that all directional optical apparatus was unusable because of the spray. Evidently this was recognized by the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla too, as the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla gathered from a hint to pay attention to the range and the possible employment of torpedoes by night. At 1410 the Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla replied to the inquiry regarding his intentions to the effect that the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla would wait. As the speed of our destroyers sailing in company was restricted to 28 knots and the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla evidently did not want to abandon the torpedo boats the cruiser succeeded in steadily closing up. At 1415 our formation was roughly in line ahead in quarter of an arc southwest of the cruiser.

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The Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla ordered the 1st (aft) Destroyer Div. and the 3 torpedo boats furtherst astern to alter course to starboard, intending that this group should break through to the east by outflanking the cruiser in the north. He simultaneously ordered the Commander of destroyers Z "32" to turn east with the 2nd Destroyer Div. and the 3 leading torpedo boats, reasoning that a new enemy was approaching from Cape Finisterre. At that time the position was BE 6961. The enemy cruiser followed the movement of the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla, and apparently very soon scored hits on destroyer Z "27", which put the destroyer out of control. Thereupon the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla ordered the ships of his formation to turn away. Destroyer Z "23" was ordered to close up. Nothing more was heard from Z "27" after this time. From radiogram it was concluded that the formation was gradually split up. At 1520 the Commander of destroyer Z "32" ordered the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla to attempt to break through to the east, while he himself advanced to the west with his division to the support of destroyer Z "27". The 4th torpedo Boat Flotilla advanced at high speed. At the request of destroyer Z "24", which was following on one engine only, the speed was reduced, and after turning back the destroyer Z "24" was picked up at 1720. On the return passage to Brest the formation was shadowed from the air as far as 60 degrees W.

The Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla reported the following experiences:

- "1. The operation had been planned by the enemy.
2. The weather was in favor of the enemy as it practically eliminated the use of torpedoes.
3. Our reconnaissance reported the enemy too late. The He 177's did not realize our hopes for a timely and decisive intervention.
4. The torpedo boats were a great burden to the destroyers because of their low speed. Only the excellent action of the destroyers and very particularly of the 1st Division under the command of Capt. Erdmenger enabled the torpedo boats to withdraw from the enemy.
5. The enemy was probably firing on radar-controlled data; the fire was well-placed and the spread was astonishingly slight despite the great range".

At 1715 Naval Group West transmitted a report from torpedo boat T "22" according to which torpedo boat T "25" sank after receiving two hits. Strong enemy fire prevented torpedo boat T "22" from closing-up in order to render assistance. The torpedo boat T "26" was observed withdrawing to the south under heavy enemy fire. The following is the last very-short-wave message from T "26" which was picked up:

"I am scuttling the boat and abandoning her."

The fates of the torpedo boats T "25" and "26" are therefore established.

At 1810 Group West reported that the fuel supply of the torpedo boat T "22" would suffice to reach St. Jean de Luz.

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Late in the evening after having entered the Gironde, destroyer Z"32" transmitted a short report on the bringing in of the TRAVE from 27 to 29 Dec. For copy as per 1/Skl 4378/43 Gkdos. as overleaf.

The report reveals:

At 1018 on 27 Dec. one FW 200 was sent out to the north in order to reconnoiter the rendezvous for the TRAVE. In the event of an engagement with the enemy the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla intended to cover the torpedo boats with the destroyers and break through to the east. The two cruisers which were sighted in the east at 1340 were assumed to belong to the GLASGOW class. The destroyers Z"27" and "23" came under enemy fire and carried out a joint torpedo attack which was unsuccessful. The enemy fire was returned by all destroyers, but the fall of shot was uncertain. The enemy cruisers withdrew at high speed on alternating courses, mean course southeast, in position ahead of our formation, opening fire on the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla at 1352, which was thereupon ordered by the Commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla to attack with torpedoes. Shortly afterwards the formation was ordered to separate. The Commander of destroyer Z "32" was ordered to outflank the enemy from the south by breaking through to the east. As a further enemy group was reported approaching from Finnisterre, a determined thrust eastward was ordered. Destroyer Z"32" with destroyer Z"37" and Z"24" carried out a torpedo attack on south-southeast course by slowly closing up in quarterline to torpedo firing range; 10 torpedoes were fired, but the enemy took avoiding action. Shortly afterwards the enemy turned hard away on northerly course and opened heavy fire on destroyers Z"32" and Z"37" without scoring hits. The breakthrough to the east was carried out by destroyer Z"32" at 1440. After being informed by radiogram that the destroyer Z"27" was out of control, the destroyers Z "32" and "37", and to start with Z "24" as well, headed for the place of the accident, in order to render assistance. The torpedo boats with the Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla were dismissed in eastward direction. At 1540 destroyer Z"24" reported the breakdown of one engine and was detached to join the torpedo boats. The destroyers Z"32" and "37" continued westwards. At 1551 the group was fired on by two enemy vessels which came in sight in the west, one of which was definitely recognized as a cruiser. The fire could not be returned owing to the great range. The group turned away to the northeast and advanced again in westerly direction at 1607. This advance was broken off at 1621 because the destroyer Z"37" reported that the oil supply would no longer suffice for an engagement. After re-examination of the fuel supply it appeared at 1655 that an advance to the place of the accident was just possible. Numerous enemy planes were shadowing our formation. At 1800 the destroyers Z"32" and "37" again turned on to westerly course, in order to be able to render assistance to destroyer Z"27" and the torpedo boats T"25" and "26" if needed. At that time a strong formation of He 177's was counted on to appear on the scene of action about 1745, in accordance with information received by radiogram. Shortly after 1800 Liberators carried out three bombing attacks on destroyer Z"32" and several attacks on destroyer Z"37".

At the same time an enemy cruiser again came in sight to the westward, and opened fire. Considering the enemy and the oil situation the group hereupon gave up the plan to advance and began its return east. The shadowing enemy planes were shaken off at about 7 degrees West.

At 1827 Group West reported that the returned torpedo boats T"23", "24", and "27" as well as destroyers Z "24", "32", and "37" were undamaged and operational. An oiler was ordered to St. Jean de Luz in order to supply torpedo boat T"22". It was not known whether destroyer Z"23" met the torpedo boat T"22". The D.G.-equipment was well as both compasses aboard destroyer Z"23" were out of order. A minesweeper escort is on the way. At 2315 Group West reported that the Commander as well as 33 men of torpedo boat T "25" were rescued by submarine U "505".

Group West transmitted a detailed report from the Air Commander, Atlantic on the operations carried out by the Air Commander, Atlantic on 28 Dec. For copy as per 1/Skl 43670/43 Gkds. see "Bringing in of the TRAVE". The same work contains the view expressed by the Air Commander, Atlantic to the Commanding Admiral, Submarines on the operation on 28 Dec., which deals with the following questions:

I. How was it that the enemy forces were not detected until they were almost on top of our own forces?

2. Why did the German Air Force not intervene in the action between our destroyers and the British cruisers?

The answer to the first question is that by endeavoring to extend the reconnaissance for the TRAVE as far as possible to the west, the area east of 12 degrees W was reconnoitered only on the return flight so that an enemy sailing east of 12 degrees W was enabled to approach our forces for three hours undetected by our air reconnaissance. There was no way of reconnoitering the area west of 12 degrees W in the dawn, or the area east of 12 degrees W while it was still dark, even with an instrument, as neither the Air Force nor the Navy possess technical means of discriminating between friend and foe. The second question is answered by reference to the weather. The Air Commander, Atlantic makes the departure of destroyers for the bringing in of the blockade-runners dependent on weather which guarantees effective assistance to the Air Force whatever the circumstances. This proviso was not met on 28 Dec. In a review of the operations in the Bay of Biscay sent to the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command, Navy it was stated:

"Our forces had been operating in the combat zone for seven days with only a few hours respite and in continuous very bad weather with frequent air attacks. In the first stage of the operations there were some excellent navigational performances, (towing in of destroyer ZH "I" by torpedo boat T"25" from 6 degrees W, and unaided return passage of destroyer Z"23" with severe damage from 10 degrees W). During the engagements the use of weapons on our side was greatly

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hindered by a wind force of 7-8". The foregoing data already gives a fairly clear idea of the whole operation which was carried out for the purpose of bringing in the TRAVE. Unfortunately the operation failed. In addition to the loss of the TRAVE with a most precious cargo, the destroyer Z "27" and the torpedo boats T"25" and "26" were lost. It is safe to assume that a large proportion of the crews were saved. The opportunity of inflicting heavy damage on the enemy was not exploited, though the proportion of the forces were concerned - was not unfavourable. For it is to be feared on the basis of the short action reports from the Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla and the Commander of Z"32" that actually only two enemy cruisers were involved against which stood five destroyers and 6 torpedo boats on our side. Perhaps the TRAVE would not have been lost had this ship proceeded on the dummy course prescribed. There is, however, as yet no actual information regarding the place of loss and the time. No final judgement on this matter can therefore yet be passed. Nevertheless it was only to be expected that the TRAVE was much more endangered than her predecessor, the BERNAU, which had the advantage of surprise in her favor. In how far the assumption expressed by the Commander of the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla regarding the enemy conduct is true, is uncertain. It is very possible that after the experience with the BERNAU the enemy acted in accordance with a well thought-out plan, in order to destroy the blockade-runner as well as the escort vessels. This assumption, however, is opposed by the fact that obviously only 2 ships were operating and it is scarcely to be presumed that with these the enemy believed himself able to achieve important successes against these fast and strongly defended vessels. Be that as it may, it is already quite clear that our flotillas were not only denied success but that they had also to accept a considerable defeat. It is a pity that our air force was unable to operate and that the reconnaissance was incomplete, but it does not alter the fact that the operations by our naval forces were in themselves a disappointment which need not have been expected.

As in the case of the SCHARNHORST, the direct and indirect reasons for the bitter experiences of these last few days must be investigated carefully.

Atlantic Coast:

One ground mine was cleared off St. Nazaire.

Channel Coast:

The projected torpedo operation with employment of smoke by day by the 5th PT Boat Flotilla was canceled because no enemy reports were received. 1 mine was cleared northeast of Calais.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters

I. North Sea:

One ground mine was cleared off Terschelling. The mine exploding vessel "32" continued her passage west from the Hook at 1800.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:Enemy Situation:

Only one plane was detected operating over the North Sea. There are no reports from the PQ convoy. Radio intelligence only located movements of the Russian destroyer "E" off Kola Bay.

Own Situation:

During the attack by eight enemy planes on our north-bound convoy off Stadlandet at 1400 on 28 Dec., six near-misses were observed. One of the attacking planes was shot down by patrol boats. The same day an attack by five enemy planes on the sub-chaser UJ "1703" northeast of Stadlandet was repelled by the sub-chaser.

Destroyer Z "33" reported that she had run aground. She will have to dock in Narvik; the length of time needed for the repair cannot yet be estimated.

Eighteen ships were escorted north, twelve ships south. There are no reports from the area of the Commanding Admiral, Polar Coast owing to a line fault.

The submarine group "Eisenbart" has taken up patrol line from AC 6845 to 6965.

Four submarines were ordered to head for AB 82 and to form Group "Isegrimm".

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.I. Enemy Situation:

On 28 Dec. a second British transport PT boat put onto Lysekil. The two boats were lying in the harbor at 0800 on 29 Dec. laden and ready to sail. The intelligence Center, Sweden takes for granted that they will leave escorted by the DICTO and LIONEL.

2. Own Situation:

In view of the above report Commanding Admiral, Dofon-
ses, Baltic ordered Group LODY to half an hour's notice.

There were no special events in the rest of the Baltic area.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The submarine U "178" reported that a U.S. steamer of the C.I. Type (11,000 BRT) was sunk in LC 2197 (Indian Ocean) on 27 Dec.

The submarine U "543" reported the sinking of a destroyer during the night of 29 Dec. from BC 5818.

During the same night five destroyers in BE were successfully attacked with Zaunkoenig torpedoes:

From BE 6592 the submarine U "421" reported a hit on a destroyer from BE 5763. the submarine U "629" reported the sinking of a destroyer out of a small southbound convoy from BE 7641 the submarine U "541" reported: was fired on with star-shells by a search group consisting of 3 destroyers. All 3 destroyers were annihilated by Zaunkoenig torpedoes. Aphrodite O. K."

Since on 24 Dec. the sinking of four other destroyers in BE was reported, altogether nine enemy destroyers have been sunk by our submarines in the same area during the escort operations for the BERNAU and the TRAVE, part of this number possible having been tactically connected with the enemy counter-operations. Our air reconnaissance for the northbound convoy in BE remained without success. Group "Borkum" is being transferred to the patrol line from BE 7399 to 5896. Reconnaissance by three planes is intended for 30 Dec.

VI. Aerial Warfare.I. British Isles and Vicinity:

For operations of Air Commander, Atlantic on 28 Dec. connected with the bringing in of the TRAVE, see situation West Area.

In the course of 29 Dec. the operations of the Air Commander, Atlantic were concentrated around the spot where the destroyer Z"27" and 2 torpedo boats were lost. Altogether 30 rubber dinghies were sighted and supplied with food. An Irish steamer which was guided to the spot, was seen to pick up the survivors.

By day single enemy planes approached occupied western territory. In the evening hours 25 enemy planes flew over the Gironde on minelaying operations.

2. German Reich Territory:

In the evening Berlin was again attacked by strong enemy bomber formations. This time the bombs and damage were concentrated in the south and southeastern areas of Greater Berlin. For damage, as far as it has been assessed, see

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Daily situation. There is not yet any report on the successes achieved by the defense.

At the same time 30 enemy planes flew over the Heligoland Bight on minelaying operations.

3. Mediterranean Area.

Our forces carried out reconnaissance in the Italian coastal area. According to photographic record at 0819 there were nine vessels presumed to be motor torpedo boats, two small naval vessels and two steamers in Bastia. One tanker was off the harbor (7,000 BRT)

Five evaluation of the reconnaissance of Augusta showed besides the reported vessels an additional six, presumably, LCT's 250.

Seven steamers and several patrol boats on northerly course were in the Otranto Straits at 1715.

About 200 enemy bomber and fighter planes were operating in the Italian front area. For the rest major enemy forces carried out attacks against Ferrare, Rimini, the airfield at Foligno and the harbor of Civitavecchia. Two of the attacking planes were shot down by our anti-aircraft artillery.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast our Air Force sank one freighter (450 BRT) in the western harbor on Hvar on 28 Dec. On 29 Dec. targets west of Hvar were effectively machinegunned and nine vessels were damaged by eight BF 109's.

Over the Aegean eleven enemy reconnaissance planes were detected by day and two by night.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

On 28 Dec. one FIJI class cruiser left Gibraltar for the Atlantic. On 29 Dec. two transports (presumably), and two destroyers passed the Straits of Gibraltar in easterly direction. The WARSPITE left dock at noon on 28 Dec.

Own Situation:

At 1657 submarine alarm was reported in CJ 1432 off Cape Martin. Convoy of a steamer of 6,168 BRT was carried out off the south coast of France.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance a destroyer and two large merchant ships were 85 miles north of Trapani bound for Naples. For photographic reconnaissance of Bastia, Augusta bound for Naples. For phototgtaphic reconnaissance of Bastia, Augusta and reconnaissance of the Otranto Straits see Aerial Warfare, Mediterranean Area. Photographic reconnaissance of the east coast of Sicily on 28 Dec. was the first which had been carried out since the beginning of enemy operations against the Italian mainland. According to the preliminary evaluation so far to hand Augusta is still the main harbor in preference to Catania and Syracuse. The small number of war ships in these harbors and the almost complete absence of landing craft is striking.

A submarine was reported south of Mentone at 1702.

Own Situation:

The submarine chase off St. Tropez is being continued by one sub-chaser.

The Italian assault-boat group returned from Porto Fino to La Spezia. During several air attacks on Civitavecchia on 28 and 29 Dec. the motor minesweeper M "7009" was sunk by a direct hit. Two mine-clearance vessels shot down one of the attacking planes. On 28 Dec. naval anti-aircraft artillery shot down one plane in the course of an attack by fighter bombers on Benedetto.

A large Italian ammunition dump was secured in Ancona.

3. Area Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

The PT boat operation during the night of 28 Dec. was canceled on account of the weather. The capture of Korcula after mopping-up operations was successfully completed with the acknowledged cooperation of the German Air Force and the Navy. The enemy lost more than 500 killed, 300 wounded and 212 prisoners against 100 killed and wounded on our side. Among the great amount of captured material, Partly of British origin there were 21 small coastal vessels, four motor boats, and 160 boats. For details see Teletype 1710.

The Korcula Channel was opened again to shipping.

The steamer GOFREDO MAMELLI (4,730 BRT) ran aground near Zara

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after hitting a mine. Group South states that the reinforcement of the naval coast artillery as requested by Admiral, Adriatic for the occupation of the islands is urgently necessary. The Group, for its part, considers the division of the Naval Shore Command, Dalmatia into two Naval Shore Commands necessary. For details see Teletype 2040. The matter will be settled by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff.

b. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

On 28 Dec. it was reported that one submarine was sighted north of Candia, on 29 Dec. one submarine was sighted off Cos and one off Leros.

Own Situation:

On 28 Dec. one auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by six enemy planes in the harbor of Nicolaos.

In reference to the attempt by an enemy vessel to enter the harbor of Pigadia on the evening of 26 Dec., it is reported retrospectively that an army sentry fired on an unknown vessel which did not give the recognition signal when approaching the harbor. No further details are to be had.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

During the night of 29 Dec. four boats of the 1st PT Boat Flotilla will be sent out for operations off Cape Utrisch and for an attack on Anapa.

One enemy plane was shot down by naval anti-aircraft artillery.

So far the attempt to tow off the 150 ton-crane at Kinburn has been unsuccessful.

The escort service was carried out according to plan.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

On 26 Dec. Japanese Naval Air Forces attacked a convoy in Borgen Bay (northwest corner of New Pomerania) achieving the following results:

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sunk: too large cruisers and two large transports.
heavily damaged: three large transports
20 enemy planes were shot down
17 of our planes were lost.

U. S. carrier-borne planes sank two large destroyers and ten freighters in the harbor of Kavieng (northwest tip of New Mecklenburg); in addition one destroyer and two freighters were sunk in a torpedo attack.

Items of Political Importance.

Reuter officially reported the appointment of Admiral Ramsay as Allied Naval Commander in Chief and Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh Mallory as Allied Air Commander in Chief under General Eisenhower. The appointment of Admiral Ramsay is noteworthy on account of the fact that this Admiral has been Commanding Admiral, Naval Station, Dover since the beginning of the war.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Report from Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Operations Div., Naval Staff on the bringing of the TRAVE in accordance with the report in War Diary 29 Dec.

The Chief, Naval Staff ordered that the sinking of the five destroyers by submarines in the combat zone yesterday be included in the Armed Forces communique on the action in the Bay of Biscay.

II. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reports on the request to the Navy for the transfer of 700 technicians for three or four months to benefit the production of accumulators. The Commander in Chief, Navy has made it plain that the Navy must do what it can to help. The production of accumulators affects the submarine program.

The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament furthermore reports that the allocations were considerably smaller than requested. For the time being it is still being investigated in how far this affects the individual sections.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

III. According to information received from the Naval Liaison Officer, Air Force, Operations Staff our reprisal raids on London employing 2-300 bombers were scheduled to begin on 29 Dec. They have been delayed by unfavorable weather.

Furthermore the Air Force, Operations Staff requested the Commander in Chief, Navy to place three meteorological submarines at the disposal of the Air Force to assist in the above-mentioned attacks. The Chief, Naval Staff states that the fulfilment of this request can be taken for granted.

IV. The German Embassy in Ankara again suggested with regard to the lively traffic in the Turkish harbors of Izmir, Alexandrette and Beirut that submarines be sent out to these areas. The Naval Staff suggested that the next submarine to be completed in Pola on 9 Jan. be sent to the eastern Mediterranean. The Chief, Naval Staff agreed. The concentration of submarines in the Mediterranean now proceeds in such a way that every six or seven days a submarine makes a breakthrough.

This method has proved satisfactory. During the last weeks two submarines were lost, probably while still west of the Straits.

V. Army Situation:

The Army General Staff's request to the Fuehrer for the withdrawal of the Zaporozhe bulge in order to gain reinforcements for the Kiev- and Nevel fronts is not yet decided on.

The heavy defensive fighting near Kiev is in full swing. The enemy achieved fairly large penetrations in the region of Ninniza. Korosten was evacuated according to plan. Zhitomir is under strong enemy attack.

Further defensive successes were scored in the course of the fighting in the Vitebsk area.

The Chief, Naval Staff again emphasized the consequences to the whole Baltic situation if our front were withdrawn to Lake Peipus. (Among other things the danger from the air to Gdynia, Danzig and Elbing.)

The Chief, Naval Staff will mention this subject again to the Fuehrer during the next conference.

The Chief of the Army General Staff expressed his gratitude to the Chief, Naval Staff for his wellmeant intention of relieving the eastern front by the operation of the Task Force.

Special Items.

I. On 30 Dec. the Chief, Naval Staff and the Commanding Admiral, Group North, Commander in Chief, Fleet discussed the operation carried out by the Commanding Admiral, Task Force in Northern Waters on 26 Dec. and the consequences resulting from it. For copy of these discussions with suggestions made by Group North for the employment and organization of the naval forces as per 1/Skl 4027/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. 8. The Chief, Naval Staff intends to settle the issue, raised in the course of the discussion, as to whether the PRINZ EUGEN shall be assigned to the Task Force, after his report to the Fuehrer (2 Jan. 1944), since then it will be easier to get an overall picture of the situation (Army plans etc.).

II. Subject : Operation SCHARNHORST:

In a further addition to the short report of the action on 27 Dec., the 4th Destroyer Flotilla reported among other great things that the crew members who were unaccustomed to the sea had been a greater disadvantage than the weather. The Flotilla therefore requested that an end be put to the never-ending changes in personnel.

Since paragraph 5) of the order issued by the Commander in Chief, Navy to the Navy on the loss of the SCHARNHORST did not absolutely eliminate misconstruction, the Flotilla reports the following in addition:

"a. At 0315 on 26 Dec. radio message from the Commanding Admiral, Task Force to the 4th Destroyer Flotilla: "With reference to Radiogram 0137/35, report your weather forecast."

Radio message from the 4th Destroyer Flotilla to the Commanding Admiral, Task Force: "With following sea and wind no difficulties so far; however, there is no basis for a forecast. Counting on an improvement in the weather."

b. On 26 Dec. 1340/37 radio message: "To 4th Destroyer Flotilla:

"Withdraw" The reasons for this order are unknown to the Flotilla. According to the judgement of the Flotilla a meeting with the convoy was then still quite possible. The Flotilla asked for shadower's beacon signals by short signal on the submarine wave.

By interrogation of the operators it was endeavored to find out whether this was a false message put out by the British. No proof of this could be found. Passage on enemy course was continued and the Commanding Admiral, Task Forces was asked again by radio message for further instructions. Thereupon at 1436 the Commanding Admiral, Task Force radioed the 4th Destroyer Flotilla "put into port". In view of the Flotilla the situation did not justify action in opposition to this twice-repeated order, the more so as the convoy did not come in sight and the Flotilla did not possess any better information than the Commanding Admiral, Task Force.

c. Paragraph 4), last part, and paragraphs 7) and 9) are based on the effort to make the supposed intentions of the Commanding Admiral, Task Force known to the Command in the report on the loss of the SCHARNHORST. For own review of the situation see Courses steered."

It must be added that following the short report from the Commander of the 4th Destroyer Flotilla on 27 Dec., the Chief, Naval Staff sent the following appreciative teletype to the Commander, 4th Destroyer Flotilla, with copy to Group North, Admiral, Northern Waters:

"From the data so far available and in agreement with paragraph 9) I see your conduct was correct during the last convoy operation. I particularly acknowledge your determination to attack the enemy, even under difficult conditions."

III. In reference to the Fuehrer Directive 51 the Chief, Armed Forces High Command reported that with immediate effect the Fuehrer has prohibited any withdrawal of personnel and material from the areas of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, West and of the Commanding General, Armed

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Forces, Denmark; excepted is exchange of personnel within the reserve divisions subordinate to the Chief, Bureau of Military Armament and the Commander, Army Reserves and the training units of the three Armed Forces and of the Waffen-SS. The Fuehrer will decide on the withdrawal of armored formations subordinate to the Inspector General of the Armored Forces and of the assault-gun units and artillery battalions subordinate to the Chief, Bureau of Military Armament and to the Commander, Army Reserves as well as of the units belonging to operative naval and aerial warfare as each case arises."

IV. In the course of the preparations in accordance with Fuehrer Directive 51 it has proved necessary that the supreme commands of the three Armed Forces are kept mutually informed on the strength of forces and their distribution. This should include overall information (forces of all three Armed Services, of the Organization Todt, of the Reich Commissioner (police) etc.) as well as in special cases more detailed information ---- on armament, fighting strength and equipment of a base for example. On suggestion of Group North/Fleet the Naval Staff asked the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command, referring to these experiences, to issue a fundamental directive providing that the aforementioned information is not subjected to the rules of secrecy laid down in the Fuehrer directive. In this connection the Naval Group Commands and the Naval High Commands are considered the supreme operations headquarters in the naval sphere.

For copy as per 1/Skl 42927/43 Gkdos/ see War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.

From a memorandum sent by the Chief, Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command on a discussion between the Under-secretary of State in the Portuguese Ministry of War, Santos Costa and the German Military Attache in Lisbon it appears that the United States are exercising strong pressure on Portugal for the purpose of preventing further deliveries of tungsten to Germany. Santos Costa expects that this pressure will not become fully effective until February 1944. He therefore urged the German representative of the export association for war material to complete the pending negotiations with Portugal on the purchase of war material in Germany for tungsten deliveries could also be concluded. This being done Portugal would be able to resist the American pressure much better. Santos Costa expects an increase of military pressure on Portugal with the beginning of the Allied offensive, though he did not give any more precise information with regard to the latter. In the Azores there is tension between the English and the Portuguese Commander in Chief.

A survey of the operational readiness of our active naval forces as on 31 Dec. 1943 was drawn up by the Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff and recorded in War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.

V. The radio intercept report No. 52/43 contains a survey of enemy information gained from radio deciphering and radio

Radio Intelligence from 20 to 26 December.

Note: For description of SCHARNHORST operation on 26 Dec., see page 6.

Situation 30 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

All ships in foreign waters were informed by the Operations Div., Naval Staff of the loss of the ALSTERUFER and the unsuccessful attempt to escort her in by Radiogram 1715 which reads as follows:

"1. The ALSTERUFER was detected by enemy air reconnaissance on 27 Dec. Bombers which took off in the evening hours hit the ALSTERUFER so badly that the ships caught fire and it was no longer possible to send our a radiogram. According to British reports the ship sank. The fate of the crew who took to the boats is still uncertain. A search is in progress.

2. The ALSTERUFER did not follow the enemy courses as ordered by the Naval Staff in order to deceive the enemy planes, thereby rendering herself at once suspicious. The Naval Staff adds a note regarding deceptive intention to all sailing instructions. The blockade-runners must act accordingly even if they have been delayed. The observance of the times ordered is less important than the observance of the courses ordered.

3. On the afternoon of 28 Dec. our destroyers and torpedo boats which were sent out to escort the convoy in were engaged by the British cruisers GLASGOW and ENTERPRISE which were accompanied by destroyers and bombers. One of our destroyers and two torpedo boats were lost. Both cruisers were damaged. Our submarines set to the combat zone sank five enemy destroyers."

The WESERLAND received the following instructions from the Naval Staff, for information of the Captain only:

"1. In March 1943 the REGENSBURG tried to break through the Denmark Straits and was lost because there was a radar instrument aboard which comprised the ship by its radiation. The mistake was recognized and corrected. Examination of the enemy situation and of the weather conditions shows more favorable conditions for a break-through the Straits of Denmark than those which existed for the REGENSBURG.

2. On the basis of these considerations the WESERLAND receives the special task of carrying out the return passage through the Straits of Denmark. The Naval Staff is confident that the captain and the crew will execute this task successfully.

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3. The navigational data for this task will be delivered in the North Atlantic by a submarine.

4. The ship is to proceed from Kursschreiber to the North Atlantic by way of Kurrleine and the new point Klingel in order to pretend to be a ship on the route from the Cape to the United States. Further course instructions will follow.

5. The ship is to proceed in such a way that the new point Klingel will be passed on 16 Dec."

The BURGENLAND received the following instructions:

"For the Captain only!

I. The BURGENLAND and the RIO GRANDE will make a joint break-through the blockade in the North Atlantic with an interval of a few hours between them in the new moon period of January.

2. From point Bugwelle the ships are to proceed on the mean course of the convoys, United States - Cape to the new point Wera and from there on the known route followed by enemy singly-proceeding ships making for Great Britain to the new point Liese. Detailed orders for the break-through to the Bay of Biscay will follow.

3. This procedure worked well with the OSORNO. The ALSTERUFER did not keep the courses prescribed and was thus identified as suspicious and was destroyed.

4. The situation of the new points will follow separately. The RIO GRANDE received the same radiogram."

In addition to this the BURGENLAND received the following instructions:

"The BURGENLAND is to pass Wera on 15 or 16 Jan. and Liese on the evening of 21 Jan. The alteration of course in the direction of Wera must be carried out by night. The RIO GRANDE is one day ahead. The BURGENLAND will overtake the RIO GRANDE by the time Liese is reached. The passing of Buttermilch is to be fitted in in accordance with these dates.

The locations of points "Wera", "Liese" and "Strandpromenade" were likewise transmitted to the BURGENLAND by special radiogram.

The RIO GRANDE received the following instructions:

"For the captain only!

I. On the basis of the experiences recently gained, the RIO GRANDE and the BURGENLAND are to make a joint break-through the blockade in the North Atlantic with an interval of a few hours in the new moon period of Jan.

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2. From point Regatta the ship is to proceed to the new point "Wera" on the mean course of the convoys sailing from the United States to the Cape, and from there she is to sail in the direction of Great Britain to the new point "Liese", along the known route of singly-proceeding ships. Detailed orders for the break-through to the Bay of Biscay will follow:

3. This procedure worked well with the OSORNO. The ALSTERUFER did not keep to the courses prescribed and was thus identified as suspicious and was destroyed.

4. The location of the new points will follow separately. The BURGENLAND received the same radiogram."

In addition to this the RIO GRANDE received the following instructions:

"Wera: is to be passed on 14 or 15 Jan., and "Liese" on the evening of 21 Dec. The alteration of course in the direction of "Wera" is to be carried out by night. The BURGENLAND will follow the RIO GRANDE and will overtake her by the time "Liese" is reached. The passing of Ringfinger is to be fitted in in accordance with these dates."

The locations of the points "Wera", "Liese" and "Strandpromenade" are transmitted to the RIO GRANDE too.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff informed the Submarine Division, Naval Staff of the instructions issued to the RIO GRANDE and the BURGENLAND as well as to the WESERLAND. For copy of the letter as per 1/Skl i k 4079/43 Gkdos. Chefs. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.

As regards the WESERLAND the Submarine Division, Naval Staff is asked to fix a meeting point for the delivery of the navigational equipment in AK 75 on 19/20 Jan.; also to close the areas to be used by the three blockade-runners to attacks on singly-proceeding ships in good time, i.e. six days before and seven days after the announced dates of passage.

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Forty planes as well as two crash planes were detected over the Bay of Biscay as far as 18 degrees W, mostly between 1200 and 1600.

One British vessel was located at 2205 on 29 Dec. in BD 3890, at 1111 on 30 Dec. in BE 5360, and 1810 in BD 1940; a vessel escorting the KINGSTON AGATE at 1250 in BE 6738, and an unknown vessel at 1427 in AL 9790.

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At 1020 a sub-chaser reported an unidentified vessel which had passed the submarine to starboard. Both vessels were located in the Irish Sea.

At 1035 our air reconnaissance sighted a northbound convoy consisting of ten merchantmen and five escorts in BE 6727. One of our planes was reported shadowing the convoy of the KINGSTON AGATE.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

At 0200 a report was received from the Naval Attache, Madrid according to which the Navy Minister on suggestion of the Attache, ordered two destroyers in Ferrol to raise steam at once for a search. It is to be expected that they will leave at about 0300. Since passage through the British area of operations is necessary the British Naval Attache was informed by telephone in the presence of our Naval Attache. The British promised the immediate instruction of their Naval Headquarters in Gibraltar. The Navy Minister believes that the enemy will not raise any objections. Should this not be the case, however, the operation would have to be broken off in the face of superior power. The destroyers were ordered to illuminate the Spanish identification marks distinctly.

At 1015 the Naval Attache reported that the destroyers JORGE JUAN and SANCHEZ BARCAISTEGUI left Ferrol at 0800 to carry out a search patrol. The British merely pointed out the dangerousness of the operation and refused to take responsibility for any accidents which might occur.

At 0920 the Operations Division, Naval Staff instructed the Naval Attache, Madrid by teletype to try to have the German shipwrecked transferred to Spanish merchantman before entering Spanish territorial waters so that the shipwrecked might be brought to the land by a merchantman and so avoid internment. In addition to this the Attache was informed that our forces would no longer need to take over fuel in San Sebastian and Bilbao.

According to Group West the destroyer Z "23" escorted by torpedo boat T "22" entered St. Jean de Luz at 0315. A continuation of the passage from there is not possible until 31 Dec. at the earliest, because of suspicion of ground mines in Gironde.

From the Air Commander, Atlantic's report on 29 Dec. it is gathered that the Irish steamer was observed to pick up several boats and that the steamer understood the indication from the planes regarding the existence of further rubber dinghies. Group West suggested that the shipwrecked should be taken over from the Irish steamer by a Spanish destroyer.

At noon the Naval Attache, Madrid reported that the handing over of the shipwrecked to the merchantman was impossible

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without the British intelligence service gaining knowledge of it at once, as considering the large circle of persons concerned and the Spanish weakness for communication, absolute secrecy was out of the question.

In this way Spain would draw upon herself the ill-humor of the enemy powers, so that in the future we could no longer count on any help from the Spaniards. Thus Spanish agreement to our proposal is not by any means to be expected.

At 1615 the Naval Staff received a brief report from destroyer Z "24". During the execution of operation TRAVE the destroyer was only partially operational. For the rest, it is worth mentioning from the report that as a result of the sea, wind, and swell on easterly course and at maximum speed, the bridge and the fore-ship took a considerable amount of water. The firing of guns was greatly restricted, on some courses without any prospect of success. Destroyer Z "24" attributes the unfavorable situation in which our forces found themselves to the heavy sea, disadvantages of the leeward position, good visibility and the limited speed of our torpedo boats. For copy as per 1/Skl 43836/43 Gkdos. see :Bringing in of the TRAVE".

During the night of 29 Dec. the British Admiralty published a detailed report on the destruction of our blockade-runners and on the battle in the Bay of Biscay. For copy as per "Chi-Nachrichten No. 1430" see "Bringing in of the TRAVE". The report reveals that the ALSTERUFER was sighted by a Sunderland plane on the morning of 27 Dec. about 500 miles west-northwest of Cape Finisterre on easterly course. Thereupon the cruisers GLASGOW and ENTERPRISE were ordered into action, and Coastal Command also sent out Halifax-, Liberator-, and Sunderland planes. The contact with the blockade-runner was maintained. The first attack was carried out by a Sunderland which was damaged by the anti-aircraft artillery fire from the ship. A later attack by a Liberator of a Czech squadron scored an effective hit on the stern. The ship caught fire. A heavy explosion was observed. Later the ALSTERUFER was sighted lying stopped with a heavy list, and sinking by the stern; further explosions were observed. The crew which is estimated to number about 70 survivors was observed in life-boats and rafts.

In the dawn of 28 Dec. eleven German destroyers were detected by a plane about 200 miles off the place where the TRAVE was sunk. The destroyers were evidently heading for a rendezvous with the blockade-runner. Following the first reports the GLASGOW and ENTERPRISE, which were between the German formation and its base in southern France, closed up to the formation at full speed in order to engage. In spite of the strong fire from the anti-aircraft guns the R.A.F. continuously shadowed our formation.

The report further reveals: "The enemy then turned eastward. The British cruisers sighted the enemy at a range of about 12 miles in southwesterly direction early in the afternoon. Both cruisers opened fire on the enemy, who returned fire.

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For one hour the engagement continued on southeasterly course; Halifax planes and a Sunderland together with U. S. Liberators took part in the combat. The British ships were protected by Beaufighters and Mosquitos. The British forces encountered only slight opposition from enemy planes. One He 177 was shot down by a Mosquito.

The enemy destroyers seemed disinclined to take up the fight and divided themselves into two or three groups, endeavoring to escape. The cruisers concentrated on four of the enemy destroyers which had turned north. There followed a running fight which lasted until twilight. The enemy tried to withdraw from the gunfire by laying a smoke-screen. The GLASGOW reports that during the various phases of combat three destroyers were sunk by gunfire, while a number of enemy destroyers escaped, several of which were, however, damaged. About 150 survivors in life-boats, row-boats and on rafts were sighted by the planes which still kept close by. The GLASGOW suffered a few casualties. The damage caused on both cruisers was only slight. One Halifax and one Beaufighter were lost during the operation."

On the whole this report confirms the picture already gained of the course of the battle in the Bay of Biscay on the basis of the data received so far. It confirms the sinking of the ALSTERUFER. The blockade-runner evidently received a grave hit at the start so that she was no longer able to send out a report herself."

Subject: BERNAU.

The Commander in Chief, Navy issued the following instructions to Group West, 8th Destroyer Flotilla, 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla, with copy to Group North/Fleet, Commander, Destroyers, Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West:

"A German blockade-runner reached the Bay of Biscay after a passage lasting many months under the energetic command of her experienced commander. The bringing in of this ship with her precious load by Naval Group West is a victory for the Germany war. The 8th Destroyer Flotilla, Narvik and the 4th Torpedo Boat Flotilla which under excellent leadership brought the ship into the German base with great tactical ability in spite of the enemy attacks, take a special share in this success which was achieved with the support of the Air Commander, Atlantic. The casualties suffered by the forces of Commander, Destroyers who fought bravely during the ensuing operations in the Bay of Biscay are made up for this success and the casualties inflicted on the enemy. They should be an encouragement in future actions!

I express my special acknowledgement to the commanders and units who took part."

Atlantic Coast:

Destroyer ZH "I" put into Bordeaux at 1930 on 30 Dec. At 1730 destroyer Z"24" began her transfer from Brest to Bordeaux. One ELM/J mine was cleared off Lorient. Seven

submarines were escorted out.

Channel Coast:

One ELM/J mine was cleared between Ostend and Nieuport. Otherwise nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea:

On account of stormy weather only one patrol boat position was occupied. No minesweeping activity.

Seven convoys amounting to about 94,000 BRT were carried out in the Zuider Zee and Zeeland Waters.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Seven planes were detected on operations over the North Sea. At 1020 a Boston ineffectively attacked one of our convoys northwest of Tanahorn with aerial torpedoes.

The PQ convot was not located again either by our air reconnaissance or our submarines. According to radio intelligence bearings were taken of a British vessel from Kirkenes on bearing 125 degrees at 0915.

Own Situation:

Owing to faults in the line there are no reports available from Admiral, Artic Coast. In the remaining areas 22 ships were escorted north and nine south.

In lieu of the originally planned alarm minefields in Stjern- and Borg Sound (NW 70 and 71), the Naval Command, Norway again suggested a closer mine protection of Alta Fjord, since the Task Forces' objection that this would restrict the freedom of movement of the battleships now no longer applies. It was suggested as an emergency measure to lay out a double minefield between KROHNESET and the isle of TOEMERHOLM and an alarm minefield between Toemerholm and the mainland. Total requirements: 112 EMC mines.

The laying of the minefield will take about 14 days.

The Naval Staff has approved the mine-barrage west of Toemerholm as well as the alarm minefield east of it with the agreement of Group North/Fleet, and has allotted the requisite 112 EMC mines with the identification number NW 104.

The Task Force reports to Group North/Fleet:

"After the appearance of strong enemy forces in the Arctic Ocean, and after the weakening of the Task Force the material,

psychological and strategic situation seems to favor a surprise enemy attack on Alta. The Task Force suggests improvised reinforcement of the naval base by motorized Army batteries on Reich Highway 50, by bringing up batteries to fire star shells, by PT boats, by torpedo batteries (with means available), by reinforcement of Army troops, by the intensification of air reconnaissance, patrol service, and increase of signal stations. The Task Force considers the establishment of a Naval Shore Commander, Alta necessary.

Attitude and proposals of Group North are still awaited.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

One ground mine was cleared in the south part of Mecklenburg Bay. The transport and convoy service was carried out as planned in the whole Baltic area.

From 1035 -1300 2 tugs and 1 motor lighter on the route from Kronstadt to Lissi Noss were subjected to enemy fire in Kronstadt Bay. One hit was observed on the lighter. Owing to very strong enemy counter-action slight material damage was caused on our side. The firing and observation was rendered difficult by misty weather and a heavy screen.

In accordance with the order from the Operations Division, Naval Staff on 23 Dec. the Naval Command, East in conjunction with Group North/Fleet submitted plans for the laying out of anti-sweep devices for the protection of the Skagerrak barrages on 28 Dec.

Group North has granted the temporary detachment of the BRUMMER and SKAGERRAK as mine carriers, without fuel allocation, as well as a mine-transport ship. The LODY and torpedo boat T "28" will act as escort. Execution rests with the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic.

The Naval Staff agreed to the position of the proposed anti-sweep barrages and stated that the prolongation to the south by a further barrage of buoys with anti-sweep cutters is practicable. Seven hundred and twenty EMR's and 500 buoys with anti-sweep cutters as well as the remaining stock of 268 buoys with anti-sweep cutters from the West Wall allocation will be allotted. The fuel requirements for the mine-carriers and escort forces are to be taken from the current monthly allotments. A change in the mining project to longer barrages with a larger average distance between the mines in order to make up for a smaller allocation of mines is left to the quarters concerned.

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V. Merchant Shipping.

When evaluating the captured papers from the transport PT boat MASTER STANDFAST captured on 2 Nov., the Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff discovered details concerning these boats and their equipment, as well as on past and future operations. For copy of the report as per 1/Skl 53615/43 geh. see War Diary, Part D "Evaluation of Information, Foreign Navies".

VI. Submarine Warfare.

An operation by Group "Borkum" against the northbound convoy consisting of ten merchantmen reported in BE 6727 at 1045 was impossible, as the convoy was already sailing 100 miles northeast of the patrol line. Considering its strength, this convoy cannot be identical with the MKS convoy expected from Gibraltar.

At noon submarine U "744" probably torpedoed a fast westbound single ship with Zaunkoenig torpedo in AL 1215.

In the afternoon submarine U "545" detected a convoy consisting of 15 steamers on southwest course, speed 12 knots in AL 1228, out of which she torpedoed one tanker and three freighters.

From the southwest Atlantic submarine U "516" reported the sinking of a passenger freighter of 5,500 BRT in the area of Colon on 8 Dec., and the sinking of a tanker of 10,000 BRT near Aruba on 16 Dec. Submarine U "516" has expended all her torpedoes and has sunk a total of 32,500 BRT.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the evening eight of our heavy fighters attacked London, while another heavy fighter was operating over the Bay of Biscay in free-lance fighting.

By day single enemy planes approached occupied western territory; a strong formation with fighter escort carried out an attack on 14 building sites in the area of Amiens-Dieppe. Only slight damage was caused to three buildings. In addition to this ten anti-aircraft gun emplacements were attacked, one gun was damaged. In the afternoon one JU 52 was shot down over the sea off Lorient.

2. Reich Territory:

From 0955 -1540 seven bomber formations consisting of about 600 bombers penetrated the area of Mannheim via Belgium. Several fighter escort- and pickup formations flew over Belgium. A medium-heavy attack was directed against Mannheim, many of the bombs falling on places which had been damaged already. Three hundred and ninety eight planes went up in defense. Air Commander, Central Area's report has not yet come in. The 3rd Air Force reports that 17 planes were definitely and three planes probably shot down by fighters. In addition to this three planes were definitely shot down by our anti-aircraft artillery. Seventy night fighters were ordered into action during the attack on Berlin on the evening of 29 Dec., 23 planes were shot down by our air defense forces. Three of our night fighters failed to return.

On the evening of 30 Dec. minor forces carried out attacks on several towns in the Rhenish-Westfalian industrial area. For details see Daily Situation.

In Belgium and Northern France also, high-explosives were dropped on a building site the same evening.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

In the Italian area the enemy carried out attacks on Rimini, Ravenna and Padua. The main railroad stations of all three towns were seriously hit. Two planes were shot down by our fighters. Further attacks were directed on Viareggio, where the railroad station was completely destroyed. Five hundred enemy planes were on operation in the front area. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down four enemy planes. During the night several nuisance raiders were reported in the area of Padua-Udine.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast two BF 109's attacked enemy ships in the sea area of Mljet and Brac. One motor boat was set on fire and two boats were heavily damaged. Twenty four enemy planes attacked Zara. Furthermore 20 planes were reported over the Aegean by day and three planes by night; eight planes were reported engaged in the supplying of partisans in the Balkan area.

4. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea:I. Area Naval Group West:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

One steamer (4,550 BRT) was escorted off the south coast of France.

2. Area German Naval Command Italy:Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance two destroyers, probably southbound, were off Benedetto on the evening of 29 Dec., and two tankers on northerly course were southeast of Olbia n on 30 Dec.

Four enemy vessels, probably destroyers, supported the land operations by shelling the coast in the Gaeta sector during the night of 29 Dec.

According to radio intelligence four convoys or formations sailing in the area of Bhengazi were given an air raid warning at 0921 and 0932.

Own Situation:

The minelayer DWARSLAUFER and two motor minesweepers are transferring from La Spezia to the Piombino Strait for the execution of a minelaying operation. On 29 Dec. torpedo boats TA "26" and "27" were commissioned in Genoa.

So far the 4th Naval Motor Transport Battalion has shot down altogether seven enemy planes in the area of Benedetto and thereby rendered possible the unloading of ships in the harbor.

3. Area of Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:

The concentration of craft in the assembly areas for operation "Herbstgewitter 3" is almost completed. The operation, originally scheduled to take place on 30 Dec., has been delayed by two or three days since the Army is not yet ready.

In the afternoon a heavy enemy air attack was directed against Zara. As a result the steamer MAMELLI, which had run aground after hitting a mine, as well as two boats of the 11th Escort Flotilla were severely damaged and the personnel suffered casualties.

The fairway in the Rivani Channel was closed until further notice because of suspicion of mines. It is intended to employ the Arado Group because of the lack of any minesweeping devices.

b. Aegean Sea:Enemy Situation:

According to a report from the Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command, British troops are being routed via Turkey. Among others, two auxiliary sailing vessels from Chios, which vanished from the route Samos-Chios, are being used for this purpose.

Own Situation:

The mopping-up of the islands of Hirathia, Schinusa, Karas, Katochupho, Apanohupho, Amorgopula and Anaphi was completed by the landing team on 27 Dec. without special event. The mopping-up of three further islands is planned as soon as the weather improves.

The dropping of aerial mines was observed in the northern entrance to Thyra. No damage was caused by the enemy air raid on Stampalia in the morning.

Operations Division, Naval Staff asks the Coastal Defense Branch, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff to investigate whether the withdrawal of individual anti-aircraft batteries from the more strongly protected areas to the Aegean and Adriatic would help to relieve the existing lack of anti-aircraft defenses in those areas. For copy of the letter 1/Skl 43594/43 Gkdos. see W r Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

c. Black Sea:

At 0150 naval landing craft in the Straits of Kerch had an engagement with an enemy gunboat. The enemy was seen to have been hit.

During the night of 29 Dec. the 1st PT Boat Flotilla did not observe any enemy traffic in the area of Cape Utrisch. The harbor and roadstead of Anapa were empty. The plan to shell Anapa was therefore cancelled.

Kamysh-Burun was subjected to medium and heavy artillery fire from 1100 - 1400. Damage by fragments was caused to the naval landing craft.

The tanker ~~SHELL~~ 1 was towed into Constanta.

During the night of 30 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch will be manned by three naval landing craft.

Special Items:

I. Quartermaster Div., Naval Staff transmitted a survey of sea transports in the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas to the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command. This survey also covers the new ships under construction and those being transferred over land. For copy of the letter Skl Qu A IV 371/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol XIV.

II. The Commander of the 1st PT Boat Division requests that the minesweepers MS "75" and "76" which are both equipped for torpedo- and minelaying operations, be assigned to the 24th PT Boat Flotilla, and cancellation of the consent given to the German Naval Command, Italy, according to which these boats were to be assigned to the 10th Italian PT Boat Flotilla. For copy of this request see Teletype 2300.

IX. Situation East Asia.

According to a report from the Attache in Bangkok captured papers revealed the following enemy plans:

- a. Occupation of Bougainville, building of an airfield in the norther part of the island.
 - b. Engagement of Japanese fleet with the object of destroying it,
 - c. Occupation of New Britain
- U. S. rocket guns are reported on New Guinea.
The Japanese are determined to hold the line Bougainville-Wake Island.

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Items of Political Importance.

According to an Exchange report from the outbreak of war until the end of September 1943 the USSR received more than 7,000 planes about 3,600 tanks, 130,000 machine-guns, 150,000 trucks and 35,000 Army motor vehicles from the USA, amounting in all to about 3½ billion dollars.

According to a U. S. War Ministry announcement the three Railway Workers Unions of stokers, engine drivers and switchmen have not called off the strike, but only postponed it.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

With regard to the Fuehrer's order prohibiting the withdrawal of forces from the area of Commanding General, Armed Forces, West and Commander, Armed Forces, Denmark the Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff states that discretion will have to be used in applying it. For instance each transfer of a submarine could not be reported individually. Obviously the first thing to be affected will be the withdrawal of personnel from the coastal artillery to man the submarines.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has decided that the affair is to be reported to the Commander in Chief, Navy by the Chief, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff before his departure to Fuehrer Headquarters.

Otherwise nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. SCHARNHORST:

For British press- and radio reports and commentaries on the operation in the Barents Sea see "Operation SCHARNHORST".

II. By order of the Fuehrer the Operations Staff, Armed Forces High Command has taken preparatory measures against enemy large-scale landings, and issued a directive to this effect to the High Command, Navy and the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff on 28 Dec.

For copy of the directive as per 1/Skl 4092/43 Gkdos. Chefs see War Diary, Part C, Vol. A.

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III. The continuous development in the creation of improved types of mines is not yet complete, so that there will be nothing satisfactory in this field at the beginning of 1944. Operations Division, Naval Staff considers that everything should be done to place at least the results thus far achieved at the disposal of the Coastal Defense before the expected enemy operations in the Channel.

In order to guarantee this the Naval Staff asked the Naval Ordnance Division and Underwater Obstacles Branch, Bureau of Naval Armament, to gather together all the mining material and improvements as a "Channel program" in accordance with "Fuehrer directive 51" and to suggest that the Underwater Obstacles Branch appoints a particularly suitable person to handle matters connected with that task. With the exception of the allocation of mines to the Gulf of Finland on the same scale as before and the preparation of about 1,500 to 2,000 mines for the Skagerrak, the requirements for all the remaining theaters of war take second priority to the "Channel Program":

The Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament is asked to secure the highest priority for all measures connected with the "Channel Program".

For copy as per letter 1/Skl I E 43733/43 Gkdos. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. VI.

IV. On the occasion of the beginning of the New Year, Reuter publishes a review of the naval war, evidently originating from the British Admiralty, in which it is said:

"The year 1944 begins tomorrow with four main changes in the strategic situation.

First, the British Navy again dominates the whole Mediterranean.

Secondly, the cost to the Germans in the battle of the Atlantic is becoming more and more unbearable, and the Germans are losing more submarines than the Allies are losing freighters.

Thirdly, after the sinking of the SCHARNHORST the remaining vessels of the German Navy, which are lying locked up in Norwegian and Baltic harbors, have lost much of their potential fighting strength.

Fourth, British coastal shipping is proceeding from port to port freely and almost unhampered while British light naval forces have intensified their attacks on the German convoys.

At the same time the strength of the British Navy in the Pacific theater of war is steadily being brought to bear as a result of the greatly improved situation in European waters.

In the course of the year 1943 the battle of the light naval

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forces in the English Channel has been one of the most outstanding events. Numbers show the efficiency of British naval control in the channel.

During the whole of the past year the Germans only launched 1 large-scale attack against British coastal shipping. In the course of this attack four German PT boats were lost, seven further boats were damaged while no losses were incurred by British naval forces.

On the other hand British ships sank or damaged more than 100 Axis ships in the same waters, these losses including all kind of ships - from tankers to supply ships and escort vessels.

A further German failure which must be considered a great and perhaps less appreciated triumph of the British Navy is the frustrated attempt to break the blockade. Five such attempts ended in absolute failure and cost the Germans four large supply ships and one large tanker.

Among the cargo lost by the Germans during six months there were probably 30,000 tons of caoutchouc, 5,000 tons of tin, 24,000 tons of salad oil, and smaller but likewise important amounts of tungsten and chinin.

During the entire year of operations the British Navy did not lose one single large ship or aircraft carrier. Only one cruiser was lost. The heavy losses were incurred in destroyers, corvettes, motor minesweepers and trawlers."

Situation 31 Dec.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

I. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Operations Div., Naval Staff has informed the WESERLAND of the position of the new point "Klingel" and issued instructions for the continuation of the passage from "Klingel" via the new points "Glocke" and "Schelle", the positions of which will be announced later.

All ships in foreign waters received the following message from the Commander in Chief, Navy by Teletype 2250:

"I send my best wishes for the New Year to all ships at sea and in foreign waters. I expect all ships' crews to fulfill their duties the same way as in the past year. We will tackle the tasks the new year places before us with unshakeable determination in order to end the war with a victory for Germany.

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On this occasion I express my special acknowledgement to all crews of the ships which have sailed the oceans alone and unaided in defiance of the enemy."

II. Situation West Area.

I. Enemy Situation:

Lively reconnaissance was observed over the outer Bay of Biscay as far as 14 degrees W. The number of planes engaged was not reported. One British vessel was located in each of the following positions:

at	1023	in	BE	8180
"	1106	"	BF	4410
"	1826	"	BE	6620
"	1950	"		5950.

Our air reconnaissance reported at 1100:

a. in BE 3817, convoy consisting of 9 merchantment and 4 escorts on course 20 degrees, probably the same formation as reported on 30 Dec.

b. one destroyer on course 70 degrees in LE 2937 and

c. two destroyers on course 240 degrees speed 5 knots in BE 6991, evidently the two Spanish destroyers engaged in the search.

2. Own Situation:

Bringing in of the TRAVE:

In the brief report of the combat submitted by destroyer Z"23", for copy of which as per 1/Skl 43927/43 Gkds. see "Bringing in of the TRAVE", it is reported how the attempt at 1510 to break through in easterly direction with the torpedo boats, after their dismissal by the commander of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla, failed. Torpedo boats T"25" and "26" remained stopped, unmanoeuvrable. The only alternative left to destroyer Z"23" and the torpedo boat T"22" was to make off to the west and to break through during darkness, as the enemy vessels were approaching at high speed and the torpedo boats of the destroyers group Z "27" and "23" turned away to the west when Z"27" went out of action. At 1830 the boats turned on to southerly course and at 1930 set course for Cape Villano. Heavy seas allowed speeds of up to 17 knots only. At 0430 the torpedo boat T "22" was lost sight of. In the dawn destroyer Z"23" reached the coast off Cape Villano and was continuously shadowed by Sunderland- and Catalina planes from 0950 onwards. At 1527 she was attacked with machine-guns. At about 1630 a torpedo was avoided on the basis of definite hydrophone bearings. According to the observer in the crow's nest, one torpedo from the group of destroyers Z"27", "23", torpedo boats T"22", "25", "26" scored a hit on the ENTERPRISE.

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At 2150 radio intelligence intercepted a radio telephony message from unknown sender to unknown addressee.

"One hundred and sixty four men saved, seven seriously wounded, no food, bad water, need clothing."

It is very probable that this was the Irish steamer which had shipwrecked from the combat in the Bay of Biscay aboard.

Atlantic Coast:

One ELM/J mine was cleared off St. Nazaire and one off La Pallice. From 1130 to 1430 the Royan roadstead and the BERNAU were subjected to continuous attacks. The blockade runner was not hit.

Destroyer Z "24" put into La Pallice at 1845.

Four submarines were escorted in.

Channel Coast:

Owing to unfavorable weather the patrol positions were not manned. The convoy steamer MUENSTERLAND left Dieppe at 1715; it broke off the passage at Boulogne on account of enemy radar location.

Group West reported on 24 and 25 Dec. that a large number of explosions had been observed off Le Havre, which are undoubtedly attributable to the spontaneous ignition of our barrages.

The Operations Division, Naval Staff ordered the Underwater Obstacles Branch to start an investigation into the reasons for the failure. Exact details on the number of the spontaneous ignitions observed are necessary in order to be able to judge the extent of the spontaneous ignition and also the efficiency of the remaining AA 1-barrages. Instructions to this effect were sent to Group West.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

I. North Sea.

The patrol positions remained unoccupied with the exception of one position owing to stormy weather. Minesweeping operations were broken off for the same reason. Otherwise nothing to report.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

So far the PQ convoy has not been detected again.

Own Situation:

Twenty three ships were escorted north and 16 ships south. Twenty ships were delayed as a result of lack of escorts. Destroyer Z "33" left Kaa Fiord for Narvik.

On 29 Dec. the enemy carried out a surprise bombardment of the battery "Sensenhauer" and Petsamo without special effect. On 30 Dec. the steamer RUDAU (3,284 BRT) ran aground in Karm Sound during a snow storm.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.I. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from the Intelligence Division, Armed Forces High Command the two British transport PT boats left Lysekil on 28 Dec. It is possible that the boats are still lying in the skerries today. The position of the DICTO and LIONEL in Bro Fjord was still unchanged on 29 Dec. The ships were scheduled to arrive in England by New Year.

Lively traffic of tugs was observed in Kronstadt Bay.

2. Own Situation:

One ground mine was cleared south of Samsøe and one north of Grenaa.

Special Items.

I. The Armed Forces High Command intends to delineate the responsibility of the Navy and the Police as regards the control of sabotage and illegal passenger traffic, etc., in Danish waters as well as to Sweden, on the basis of tasks and areas. The Armed Forces High Command takes the view that the tasks mentioned are a matter for the Police. The Navy should only take a share where naval warfare is concerned. The Operations Division, Naval Staff asks the Naval Command, East to give its opinion as quickly as possible, with special consideration for the conditions in the Sound. For copy as per 1/Skl 43940/43 geh. see War Diary, Part C, Vol. III.

II. Following the order from the Operations Division, Naval Staff, Admiral Denmark submitted the project for ground mine barrages against enemy landings on the coast of Jutland. Mines required: 1,250 LMB's. If this demand cannot be fulfilled Naval Command, East plans to make the barrages shorter.

Operations Division, Naval Staff approved the project in the shortened form. Focal point off Thyboroen and off Bovbjerg as well as on both sides of Blavenshuk. Five hundred LMB mines will be allocated.

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As regards the barrage south of Thybaroon attention must be paid to the possibility of our own sailings inside or outside the projected barrages.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The 2nd Echelon Command, Naval Intelligence Division reported on the traffic in the harbor of Izmir and submitted a survey on the development of the traffic in the harbor from July to September 1943.

For copy as per 1/Skl 234/43 gch. see War Diary, Part D, Vol. "Data on the Enemy Situation".

VI. Submarine Warfare.

Three boats of Group "Ruegen" have been detached in the North Atlantic as meteorological boats. Submarine U "541" sank a destroyer in BE 8181 at 2235. This boat has therefore sunk four destroyers within two days.

Group "Berkum" occupies the old patrol line with nine boats.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

I. British Isles and Vicinity:

By day very strong air activity over occupied western territory, In Belgium and Northern France two bomber formation consisting of 6-700 planes with strong fighter escort carried out attacks against six building sites without special effect. About 300 Liberators and Fortresses attacked three of our airfields in the area of Bordeaux. The airbase at Cognac had to be closed until further notice. About 300 planes with fighter escort attacked the industrial area of Paris and caused considerable damage.

2. Reich Territory:

With the execution of single flights nothing to report.

3. Mediterranean Theater:

About 250 enemy planes were operating over the Italian front area, concentrating on the left wing.

In the area of Air Force Command, Southeast 18 enemy planes were observed in the area of Bar, probably engaged in supplying partisans, and twelve in the area of Mostar. Attacks were not reported. Of several reconnaissance planes over the Aegean one Baltimore was shot down by our fighters over Crete.

4. Eastern Front:

No special events were reported from the combat area of the 5th Air Force. Our reconnaissance in the Black Sea area observed the recommencement of enemy traffic across the Straits of Kerch.

VIII. Warfare in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

I. Area Naval Group West:

Enemy Situation:

On 30 Dec. at 1345 an AURORA class cruiser from the Atlantic put into Gibraltar. Two French transports which put into Malaga on 29 Dec. for the embarkation of French refugees left the harbor on 31 Dec. at 0530, escorted by two destroyers and one cruiser.

According to radio intelligence a westbound British convoy was probably in the area of Bizerta - Philippville on the evening of 30 Dec.

According to an intelligence report which came from Vichy foreign ministry sources via Nice, Ambassador Pietri reported from Madrid on 25 Dec. that a landing was planned simultaneously in the area of Sete and Bordeaux for the beginning of the New Year. At the same time a landing was to take place on the Riviera di Ponente.

Own Situation:

Two steamers (9,150 BRT) were escorted off the south coast of France by four escort vessels.

2. German Naval Command Italy:

Enemy Situation:

On the evening of 30 Dec. our air reconnaissance reported 30 ships 56 miles south of Naples, without details. During the night of 30 Dec. the coastal traffic in the area of San Giorgio was subjected to gunfire from destroyers.

Own Situation:

The minelaying operation "Hecht" was carried out off Savona as planned. The convoy traffic was hampered by bad weather.

The naval artillery detachment "632" reported having shot down two enemy planes near Falconare. A further plane was shot down by a naval landing craft in the area of Piombino.

3. Area Naval Group South:a. Adriatic Sea:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

In the course of the operation "Herbstgewitter 3" a surprise landing on Mljet was successfully carried out in the morning.

The departure of steamer ARBOREA from Trieste was delayed by the desertion of twelve members of the Italian Crew.

As a result of the enemy air raid on Zara all roads of access are blocked and the telephone lines destroyed.

b. Aegean Sea:Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

On 29 Dec. the Swedish supply ship CAMELIA was damaged by an explosion in Salonica and was beached.

On 18 Dec. Commanding Admiral, Aegean announced that altogether 298 EMF's, 37 EMC's, 207 UMB mines were required for Dec.

The Naval Staff, Operations Division has decided:

I. The allocation of the Dec. mine quota for the Aegean is impossible since the small numbers of mines becoming available must be used without exception for the protection of the West area or be set aside for the mining projects in the Gulf of Finland and in the Skagerrak in the spring of 1944.

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2. An endeavor will be made to replenish the mines before the present stocks lying in that area or still in Germany are being used up; however, as far as the EMC and UMB mines are concerned, this is doubtful in the first quarter of 1944.

Thus strictest economy in the laying out of mines in the Aegean is necessary, concentrating on just a few decisive areas; in case of need, adjustments could be made with the Adriatic allocations. Group South and Admiral, Aegean have received instructions to this effect.

c. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

Own Situation:

During the night of 30 Dec. the patrol line in the Straits of Kerch made no contact with the enemy.

Owing to unfavorable weather no PT Boats, motor minesweepers or sub-chasers were sent out on operations. The enemy again shelled Kamysh Burun from 2000 to 2200 on 30 Dec. without causing damage. The motor minesweeper R "208" ran aground near Sevastopol in the storm.

Of five naval landing craft sailing from Sevastopol to Ak Mechet, four put into Eupatoria because of the weather, the fifth ran aground south of Eupatoria.

Three naval landing craft with five assault guns put into AK Mechet from Odessa.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.



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