

J. L. ROBA

C. CRĂCIUNOIU

SEAPLANES



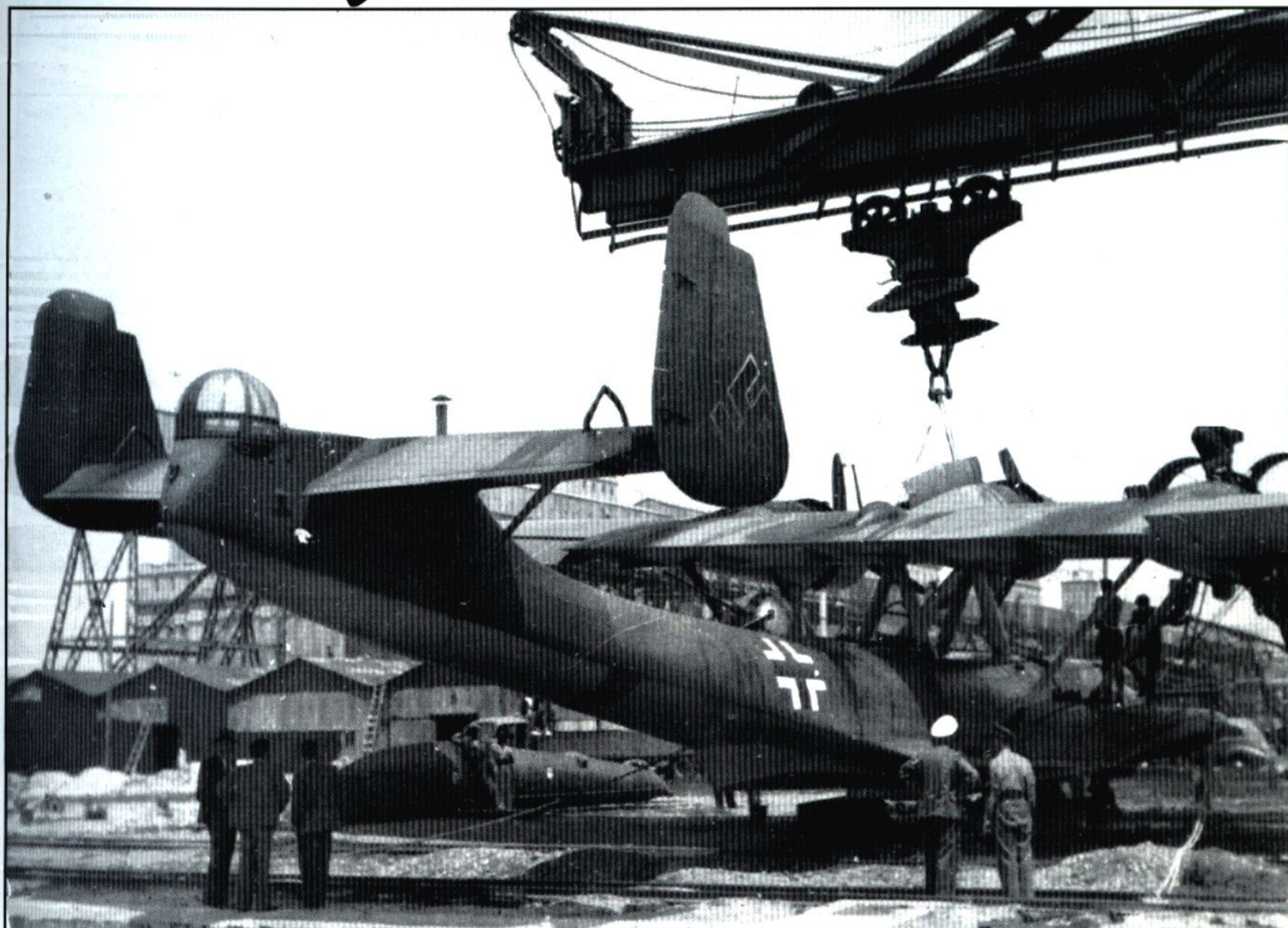
OVER THE

BLACK SEA

GERMAN-ROMANIAN OPERATIONS

1941-1944

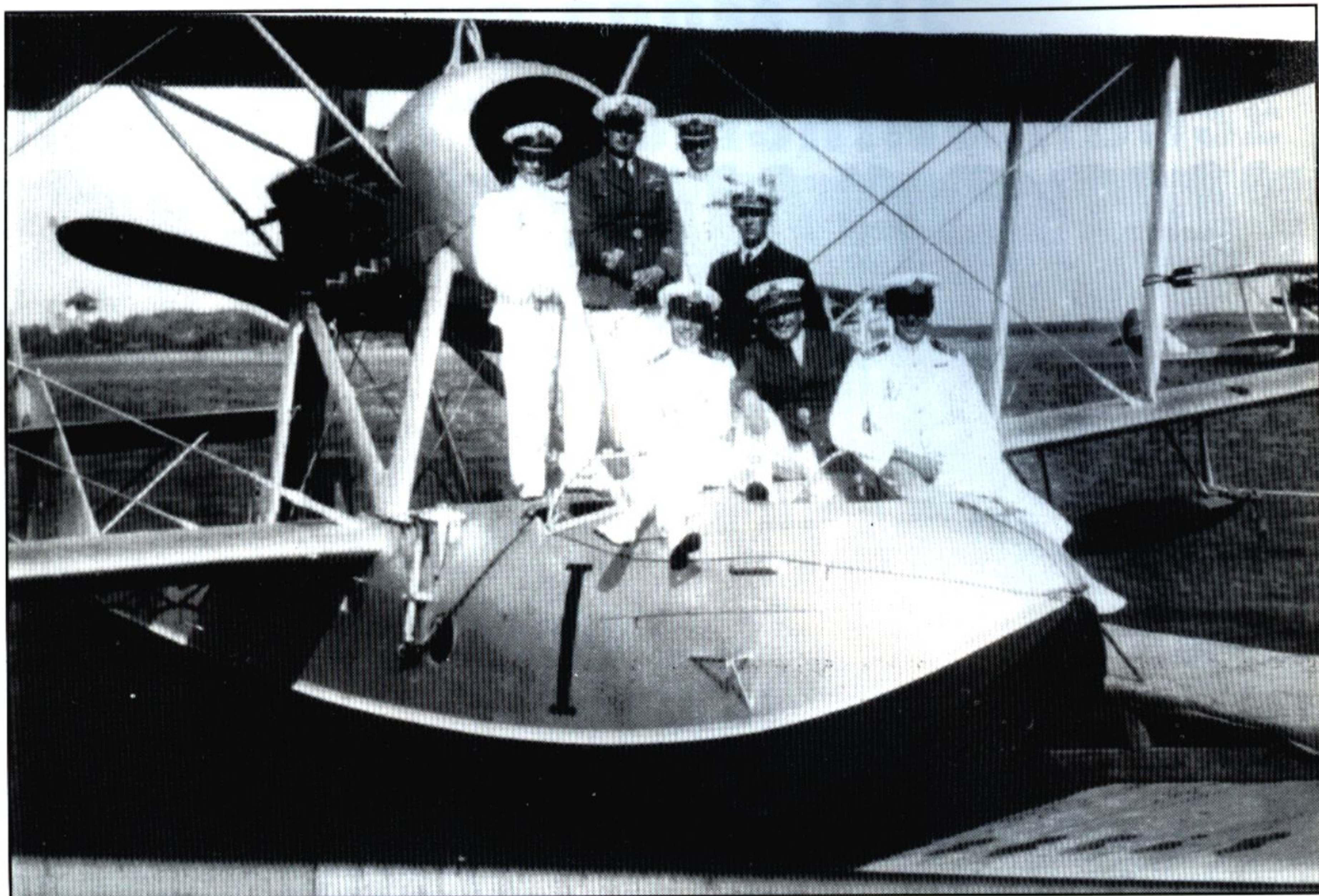
HIDROAVIOANELE



DIN MAREA NEAGRA

**Operațiunile Germano-Române
1941-1944**

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A romanian Savoia S-62 just before the war

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FOREWORD

Fifty years after the end of the 2nd World War, it is surprising to discover that many subjects were never studied. If there are plenty of books about the Battle of Britain, the attacks of VIIIth Airforce against Germany,... the seaplanes are nearly unknown.

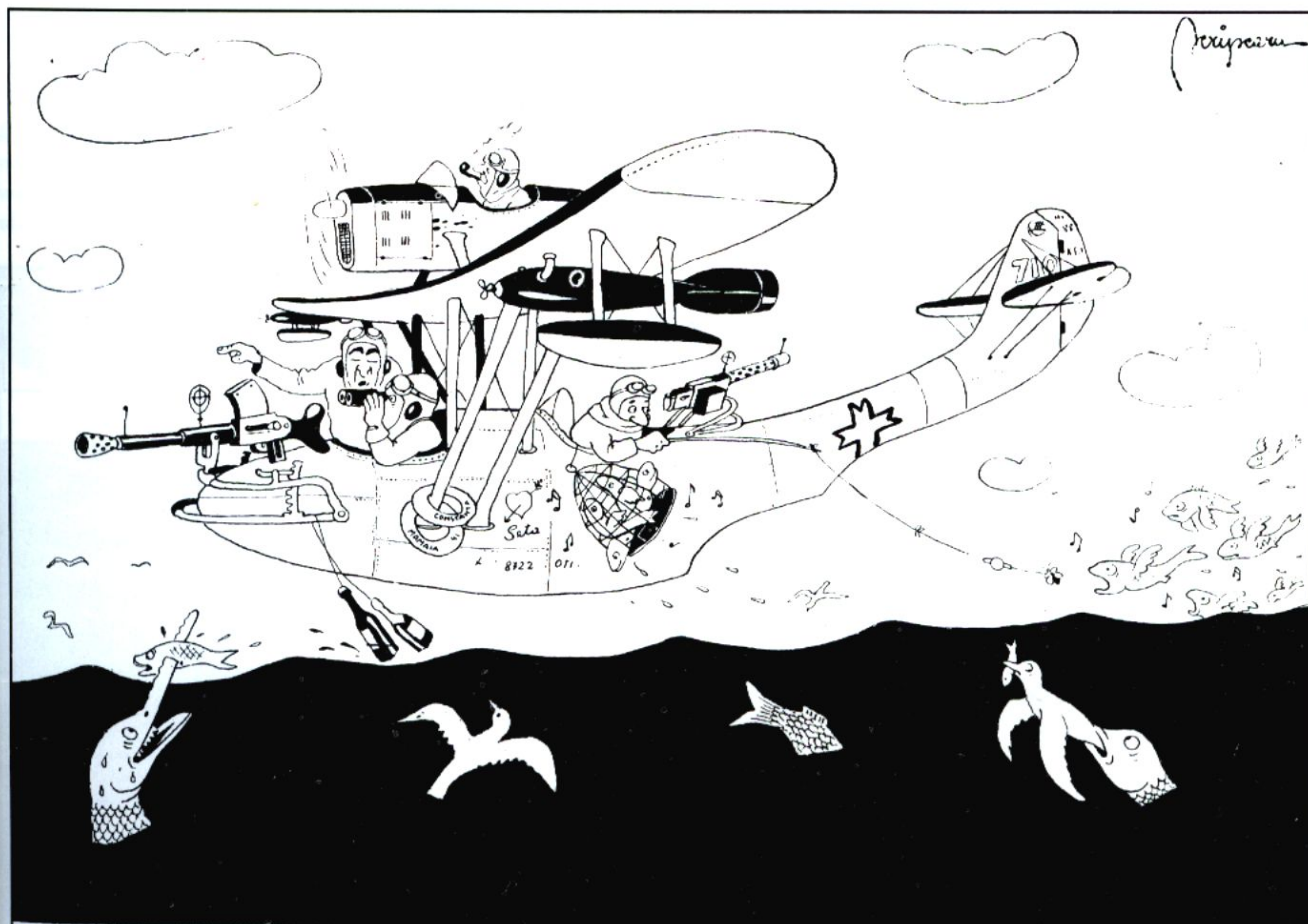
Romanian documents and veterans were the base of that book: seaplanes in the Black Sea. A happy circumstance put together the two authors and so, fifty years later, documents from the german archives were united to those of the romanian Airforce.

But the story cannot be complete. Indeed, in 1944, the soviet troops confiscated many romanian official reports preventing the authors to have details about the actions of the romanian seaplanes in 1943/44. The last chance could be offered by the opening of the archives of the ex-USSR... But where are those precious documents ?

For the german side, the authors used mainly the war diary of the Seenotbereichskommando XII (conserved at Freiburg i.Br. in the Bundesarchiv). That diary mentions mainly the operations of 8. Seenot from Mamaia and later from bases in USSR.

When possible, the authors included all informations from various sources about other sea-plane units operating in the Black Sea area.

Seaplanes were not first-line fighting machines. But the crewmen lived in an unusual manner: everyday-missions, boring hours between the sky and the sea, few survival chances in case of accident in bad weather, constant loneliness,... not always a pleasant life! Today seaplanes are very scarce and are replaced by modern flying machines. But imagine that you are one of the crewmen of those beautiful "flying fishes". In that world, losses are not only due to ennemy actions but can be caused by natural phenomena: frost, wind, storm, fog or human fault (as "errare humanum est"). Those men (Romanian, Germans and Soviets) were not first-line fighters but nevertheless their real sacrifices must be recognized.



O misiune la hidro. Recunoaștere sau vânătoare antisubmarină.

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Families KOPECZ, TÖLLE, WAGENKNECHT and WESEL.
Franz SELINGER (Ulm.).

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THE BEGINNING

In late 1940 Italian troops invaded Greece, but by early 1941 had been driven back into Albania. At that time, the British RAF, allied to the Greeks, had set up some airbases on the island of Crete and operated Wellington bombers from there over Italy's Albanian ports. The Germans feared the creation of nearer airfields on the Greek mainland from where such RAF long range bombers could attack the Romanian refineries around the town of Ploiești (the English and German "Ploesti"). Ploiești was the only significant source of German oil imports and was vital to the Wehrmacht's highly mechanised

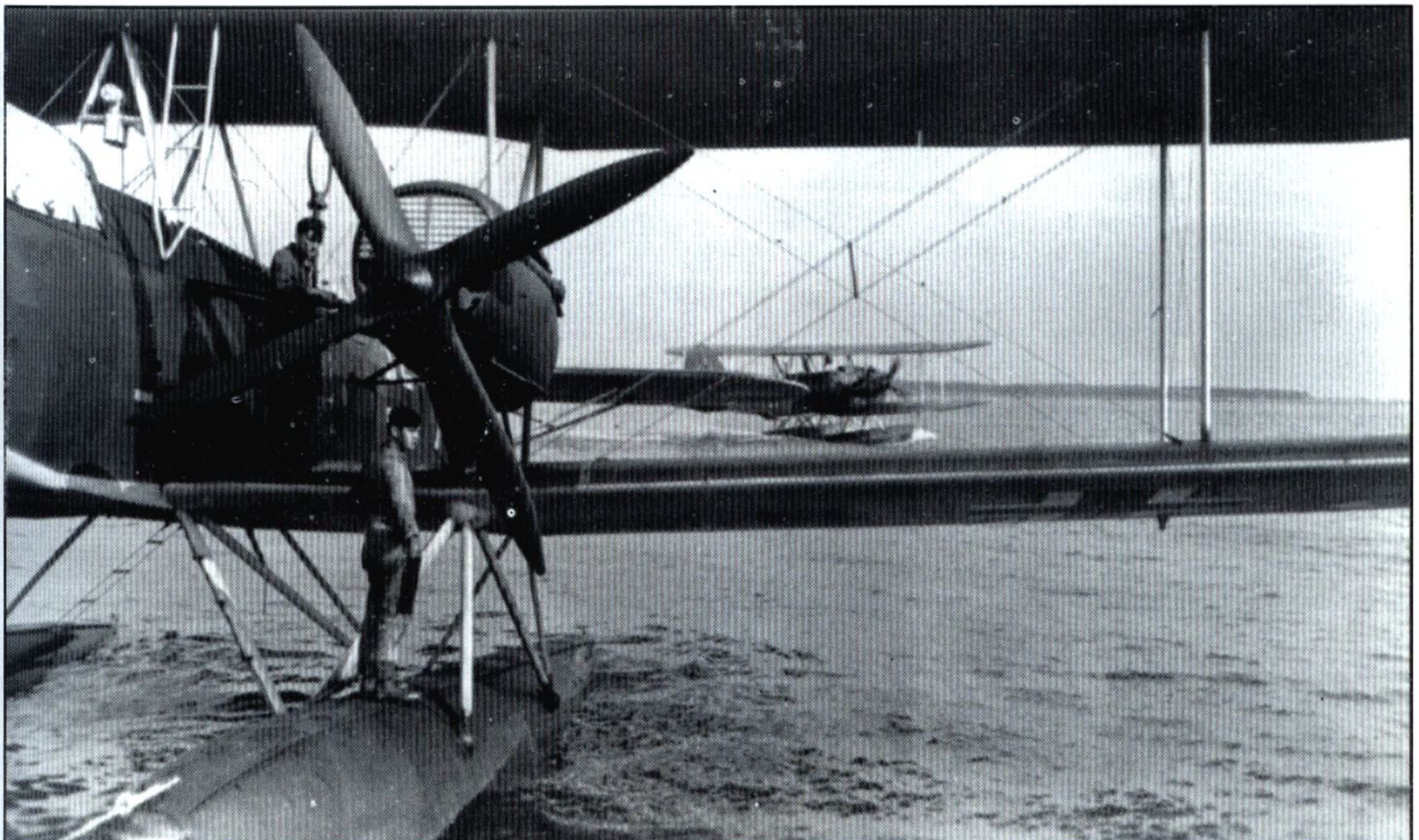
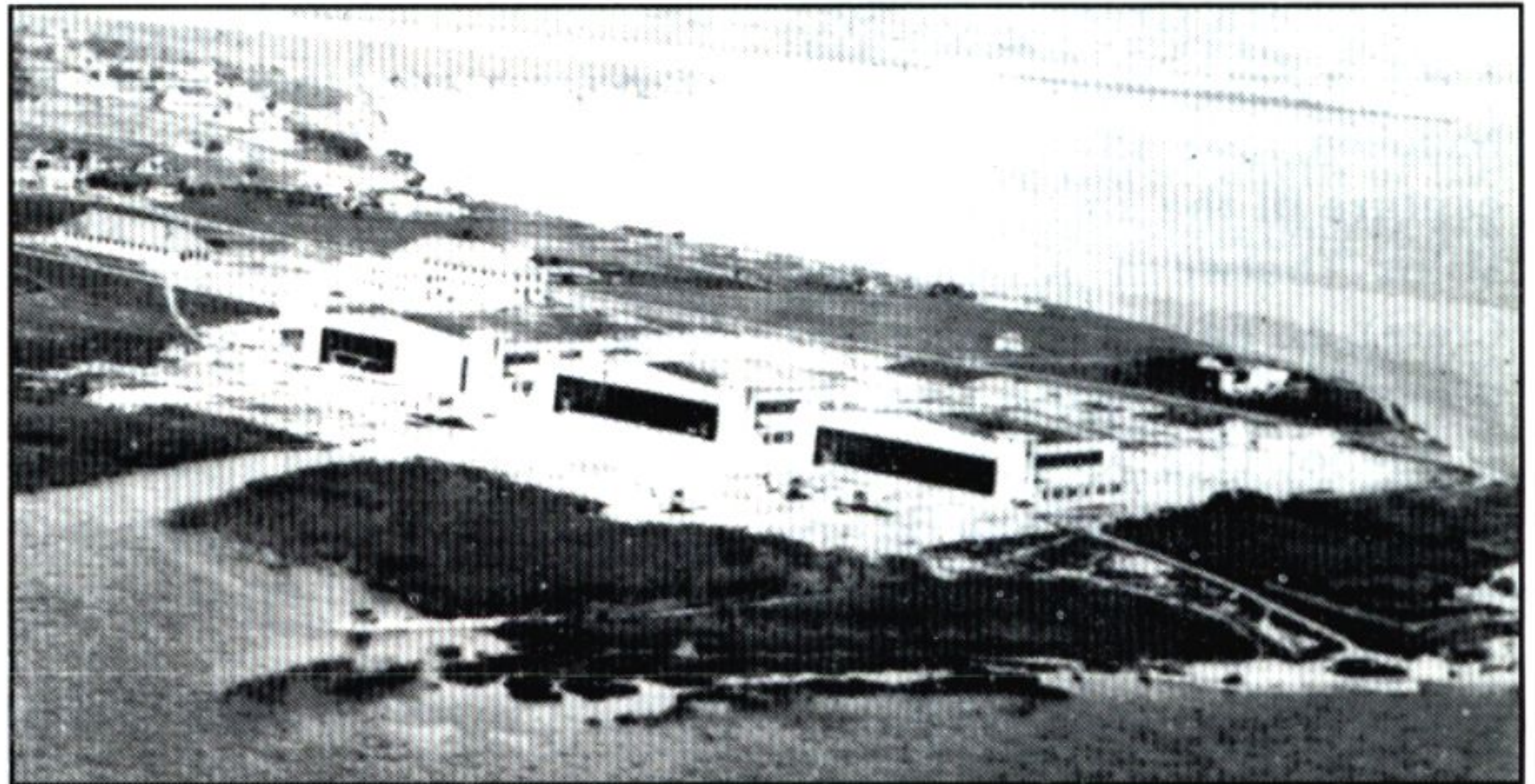
Blitzkrieg campaigns, of which the greatest, the invasion of USSR, was under planning from 18th December 1940 (Kriegsweisung Nr 21).

This obliged the Germans to intervene in the Balkan theatre, where they had no previous military presence. On 6th April 1941, they launched Operation "Marita" against Yugoslavia and Greece. By 20th April this new Blitzkrieg

had destroyed the Yugoslav and Greek armies and forced the evacuation of the British Commonwealth expeditionary force. However, its survivors were reorganised on Crete, which could still be turned into a "natural aircraft carrier" threatening Romanian oil. On 20th May 41, German paratroops landed on Crete on the first day of the Operation "Merkur". The defend-

Aerial view of the Romanian hangars at Mamaia-Siutghiol.

At the beginning of the 2nd WW, many German sea rescue units were equipped with the old but sturdy Heinkel 59.



ers had been forewarned by "Ultra" radio intercepts but, nevertheless, the german assault troops captured the island, although at the cost of many casualties.

Many Luftwaffe aircraft were shot down over the sea during Operation Merkur. In order to rescue the crews and passengers of the Ju 52s lost in the Aegean, a Seenotzentrale Ägäis (air-sea rescue Command in the Aegean) had to be created at the end of April 1941. Coming from Varna and Plovdiv (Bulgaria), it operated first from the harbour of Salonika in Northern Greece. On 30th April, a detachment went to Nauplion, near Athens. After the capture of the small island of Milos (between Athens and Crete), an advanced party was deployed there. At that time, the 7. Seenot (7th Air-sea rescue squadron) had about four He 59s; an old, rugged, but solid biplane.

The unit was reinforced by a few He 60s lent by a sea reconnaissance squadron: Seeaufklärungsgruppe 126 (SAG 126).

During "Merkur", the He59s were very busy picking not only german flyers from the sea, but also Gebirgsjäger from convoys sunk by the Royal Navy and british sailors from vessels sunk by the Luftwaffe. On 30th May 1941, fighting ended on Crete and, four days later, the Seenotzentrale learned that it had to move from Aegean to Constanța, the major Romanian harbour on the Black Sea. The Seenotzentrale was quickly replaced by the new "Seenotzentrale Athen" whose HQ was established in the greek capital. The Heinkel 60s returned to their parent unit, SAG 126. (This remained in the Aegean until 1944).

On 5th June, the move began. The material (trucks, spare parts etc.) was loaded on the cargo

ship "Norburg". The ground personnel embarked in seven Ju 52s which took off from Kalamaki at 0800 and, after a short stop at Plovdiv for refuelling, landed around 1700 on the airfield at Constanța.

Major FENGLER, C.O. of the new Seenotzentrale 12, had to contact many high-ranking officers. On the 6th, he flew to Bucharest to meet the head of the DL (Deutsche Luftwaffe Mission Rumänien). The German Mission in Romania had been created on 12th October 1940 apparently to help to train romanian aircrews on new german Bf109E-3s, Bf109E-4s and He111H-3s; but, in fact, mainly to protect the romanian refineries from a possible attack from the south (Royal Air Force) or the east (Red Air Force). The following day, FENGLER paid a visit to his Romanian equivalent, Cd Constantin GEORGESCU, of the naval base at Siutghiol.

Two Savoia 62s before the hangars at Siutghiol (Bundesarchiv Koblenz)



The naval air-sea rescue and recce units of the Royal Romanian Air Force were based on the shores of Lake Siutghiol at Mamaia, around 600 meters from the Black Sea itself. The quiet waters of Siutghiol were ideal to avoid sea planes being damaged by the heavier waves of the open sea. The German DLM decided to establish the Seenot on the other side of the lake, facing the Romanian units, thus enabling closer co-operation in the operations to come. While FENGLER awaited his aircraft, good relations were established between the future comrades-in-arms.

Romania was an expected target for aggression, as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of the 23rd of August 1939 (between USSR and Germany) had shown, so all Romanian armed forces were in a rush of modernisation and restructuration. After the rape of Bessarabia and Northern

Bucovina by the Soviets, (both territories with overwhelming Romanian population), Romania was, at least psychologically, in a state of war towards USSR. By the 1st of January 1941, Comandamentul Aero Dobrogea was formed which had to co-ordinate the air operations along the coast, in co-operation with Corpul 2 Armata of the Army and Comandamentul Marinei Regale (Royal Navy Command).

Three units were under the command of the Navy:

- Flotila de Hidroavioane - (with two Escadrilas)

- Escadrila 53 Vinateoare - (fighter Squadron) equipped with Hurricanes.

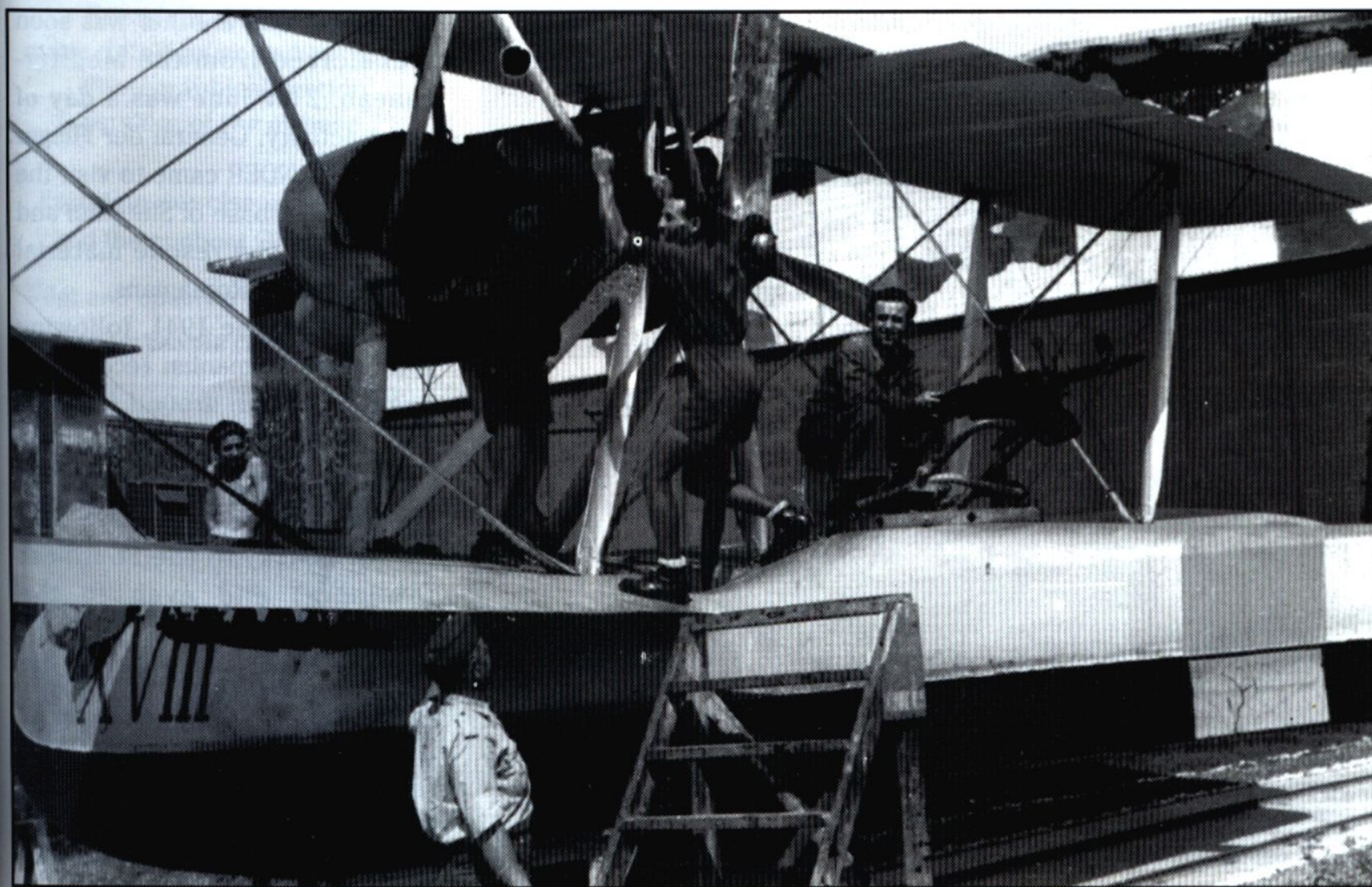
So, at the beginning of the year, the Romanian coast was defended by a mixed force reuniting the air, ground and naval forces. The efficiency of the concept was proved in the war. On 22nd June 41 (and later on 22nd

August 1944) all harbour installations worked perfectly as in peace-time, a unique example for all the Black Sea area in 2nd WW.

On 9th June, at around 1100, the six He 59s of the new 8. Seenot landed at Siutghiol. The Heinkels had to refuel at Varna (in Bulgaria), a harbour that they would come to know well in following years. The crewmen found very good barracks... but without furniture! No table, seat, or bed! On 11th June, an important meeting took place with the Cdr. GEORGESCU, Major FENGLER, and Kapitän zur See GADOW (brand-new C.O. of the German sea plane base). The purpose was to evaluate the strength of the Romanian units. According to the Romanian C.O.:

- A motor vessel of 12 m was available at Mamaia for sea rescue. Two other little ships were at Constanța and Sulina (near the Soviet border).

Romanian mechanics work on Savoia 62 N° XVIII. Notice the defensive armament of the plane (Bundesarchiv Koblenz)



[illegible]

Bosphorus (Turkey). The crews could spot many interesting targets and photographs gave more and more interesting informations (convoys, submarines, warships, minelaying operations, ...). Those operations culminated on 21st June.

That day, so was the strengths of the two romanian seaplane units.

- Escadrila Savoia 62 bis, (14 seaplanes). Under the orders of cpt. av. Dumitru TEODORESCU. Planes used for recce and as light bombers.

- Escadrila Cant 501 Z, (12 seaplanes) Cpt. av. Mircea CHIRIAC. Used as the Savoia 62s.

- Escadrila Savoia 55, (7 planes) Cpt. av. Constantin AFENDULI. Used as bombers and torpedo launchers.

- Escadrila Savoia 56 (5 planes) Cpt. av. Ion MARIN. Used for sea rescues and liaison duties.

So was the strength on the Siutghiol Lake. But official documents divide seaplanes as follow:

- Escadrila 101 Hidro-Patru-lare (patrol operations)
- Escadrila 102 Hidro-Infor-matie (intelligence and recce)
- Photographical section
- Services of the airbase

Escorting exercise: a Savoia S-62 and the gunboat GHICULESCU.

Pilot and observer of a Cant Z 501
Romanian Savoia S-55 N° 5

In all, the romanian seaplanes had the following personnal: 48 officers and 64 mechanics. There will be no significant changes in number during the three years of

war. The german-romanian units are ready that 21st June.

It is time! The greatest conflict of human History begins the next day: the 22nd June 1941...





Pilot's insignia of the Romanian Airforce.



Seaplane's insignia worn by Romanian crews

German flying units in Romania/21st June 1941

Luftflottenkommando 1 H.Q. Norkitten (Gen. Oberst Alfred KELLER)			
I. Fl. K. Fliegerführer Ostsee			
Luftflottenkommando 2 H.Q. Varsovia (Gen. Feldmarschall Albert KESSELRING)			
II. Fl. K. VIII. Fl. K.			
Luftflottenkommando 4 H.Q. Reichshof (Gen. Oberst Alexander LÖHR)			
4. (F)/122	8 Ju 88s	Reichshof	Hptm HEMM
Wekusta 76	6 He 111s	Reichshof	Oblt HEPPNER
	5 Ju 88s		
	3 Bf 110s		
IV. Fliegerkorps Ramnicul-Sarat (Gen. Lt. Kurt PFLUGBEIL)			
Stab/KG 27	5 He 111s	Focsani-South	Major Gehrard ULBRICHT
I./KG 27	30 He 111s	Focsani-South	Hptm. Fritz REINHARD
II./KG 27	24 He 111s	Focsani-South	Hptm. Reinhard GÜNZEL
III./KG 27	28 He 111s	Zilistea	Hptm. Hans Herring Frh. V. BEUST
II./KG 4	24 He 111s	Zilistea	Major Wolfgang BÜHRING
Stab/JG 77	2 Bf 109 Es	Bacau	Major Bernhard WOLDENGA
II./JG 77	39 Bf 109 Es	Roman	Hptm. Anton MADER
III./JG 77	35 Bf 109 Es	Bacau	Hptm. Alexander von WINTERFELDT
I./LG 2	40 Bf 109 Es	Janca	Hptm. Herbert IHLEFELD
3. (F)/121	10 Ju 88s	Ramnicul-Sarat	Oblt MÜLLER
	3 Bf 110s		
8. Seenot	6 He 59s	Siutghiol	Oblt. von BUCHHOLZ
V. Fliegerkorps		Zamosc	Gen. d. Fl. Robert Ritter v. GREIM
(in Poland)			
Deutsche Luftwaffen			
Mission in Rumänien Bucharest (Gen. Lt. Wilhelm SPEIDEL)			
Stab/JG 52	4 Bf 109 Fs	Bucharest/Mizil	Major Hanns TRÜBENBACH
III./JG 52	43 Bf 109 Fs	Mizil/Pipera	Major Gotthard HANDRICK
Recce units operating mainly for the ground forces			
Koluft 11		Piatra Neamt	
2. (F)/22	? Ju 88s	Bacau	
		(operated for 11.Arme)	
6. (H)/12	? Hs 126s	Botosani	
		(operated for XI.A.K.)	
5. (H)/13	? Hs 126s	Belcesti	
		(operated for XXX.A.K.)	
3. (H)/13	? Hs 126s	Vaslui	
		(operated for LV.A.K.)	

CHAPTER I: THE FIRST WEEKS OF BARBAROSSA

On 22nd June 1941, from Finland to the Black Sea, the german troops (helped by their allies) invaded USSR. The Seenotzentrale received a warning message from II./KG 4 to prepare its He 59s for rescue operations. It would be the only message because, a few minutes later, communications with Ziliştea were broken. Only at 18.00 H could contact be reestablished with forward units. On the first day of Operation Barbarossa, the Seenotzentrale was not very active but, on the night of 22/23 June, bombers of the Red Air Force are ready for counter-strikes and the first bombs fall in the area Constanța/Mamaia...

In the early morning, ten SB-2s bombers attack Constanța from Crimea, causing some destruction in the town and the harbour but missing the airfields at Constanța and Mamaia. Two

soviet aircraft are lost victims of a romanian Hurricane manned by the Lt. Horia AGARICI. He was something of a poet, and was not liked by his superior. On 23rd June, he receives the order to fly a Hurricane to Bucharest for repairs. He takes off and only meets the attacking bombers by chance. He claims three of them, but only two will be confirmed. They are the first victories by a romanian pilot over national territory and achieved instant fame. AGARICI's brother-in-law was a well-known composer and he wrote a song about "AGARICI shooting down the Bolchevick's" (in Romanian: "AGARICI" rhymes with "Bolcevici"). The song was enormously popular throughout the war. As a result AGARICI will be arrested by the victorious Soviets at the end of 1944 and condemned to hard years in a labour camp. The bombers shot

down on 23rd June were his only claims, but his fame all over Romania, due mainly to the song, made him a symbol in the anti-communist struggle. Even today all romanians know those lines.

The first war missions for the romanian seaplanes take place east of Mangalia, Constanța and Sf. Gheorghe. Nothing to report.

On 23rd June 1941, fifty soviet bombers launch at least 100 bombs in six attacks. The phone between Constanța and Bucharest is cut. The german 4./Flak 254 loses five men dead and light are wounded. Civilian casualties are certainly heavier. The following night, there are two more bomber attacks. To counter the impunity of the enemy airforce, the DLM decides to send Bf 109 Fs of III./JG 52 to Mamaia to protect the harbour of Constanța and the airfields around the town.

A romanian Hurricane. With a plane of that type, Lt. Horia AGARICI claimed the first air victories of the romanian Airforce on 22nd June 41 (Hans HÖGER)



The romanian missions for the day were to search submarine east of Mamaia Land, east of Tuzla. No result.

In the first hours of 24th June, three He 59s take off from Siutghiol to search for He 111 H-4 5Z+FA (W.Nr. 3205) of Wekusta 76, which had been on a meteorological flight. Its last message had stated that it was crashing into the Black Sea, but no trace will be found. At 7:00H, a formation of 20/30 soviet bombers again raids the Mamaia/Constanța area. This time, they meet the "Friedrichs" of the JG 52. Nevertheless, they succeed in bombing and destroying three Bf 109s on the ground at

Mamaia; a pilot (Fw. Bernhard BRAUN) is killed and another (Fw. Otto REINHARDT) wounded. Hptm MAJETIC of the Seenotzentrale is hit by splinters and seriously wounded. However, the german fighters claim eight victories and the romanian Air Force four more. Two Flak units (1. and 2./254 and 3./905) claim two bombers (a DB-3 and an SB-2) over Constanța. In the evening, six more bombers appear over the romanian coast and an He 59 takes off to rescue their downed crewmen. In fact, the Bf 109 F of OFW. WALTER (8./JG 52) is shot down. The pilot bails out and is rescued by a romanian Savoia

SM62 (Nr 16). It is the first concrete result of the good working relationship developing between the two airforces and the crew will be photographed by both propaganda services.

On 25th June, ten bombers, in three waves, attack the romanian coast. Five are claimed by the fighters. Three He 59s (NV+AV, SD+ML, SD+WH) were deployed to help the pilots of III./JG 52, but the unit suffers no loss. A romanian Savoia S62 has to be abandoned over the sea. Sadly the He 59 sent to the spot cannot find survivors of the crew (pilot = adj. Nicolae IONITA; observer = navy cpt. M. BONDARENCO and two other crewmen: a mechanic and a W/Op, a Sergeant)..

26th June will be a busy day. On the evening of 25th June, a soviet raiding force consisting of the two flotilla leaders Kharkov and Moskva, and a covering force of one cruiser and two destroyers, had left Sevastopol for an attack on Constanța. On the morning of the 26th, aircraft of the soviet 63rd Naval Air Brigade make a diversionary attack to divert the defences from the approaching warships. One pilot of 7./JG 52, the Lt Adolf DICKFELD (future Ritterkreuzträger-Knight's Cross Holder) described the ensuing battle:

"The night passed quietly except for the activities of the flies which emerged from the nearby swamp. At dawn we climbed back into our machines. A magical scene greeted us. On the horizon the huge disc of the sun emerged from the sea in a tremendous explosion of colour. We were still quite enthralled when the sirens started wailing and through our headsets came the order to scramble. We swept out of dusty Mamaia airfield.

On 24th June 41, Ofw. WALTER of 8./JG 52 is rescued by Savoia 62 N° XVI. For that action, the crewmen are photographed by the army services (Romanian Academy, Bucharest)





Soviet sailors rescued by the Romanians after the Moskva disaster.

"Russian bombers approaching Constanța", reported the new CO.

He flew ahead and the Staffeln formed up behind him. We climbed to 4,000 meters and there they were. This was the first time we had made contact with the Red Air Force. An entire squadron of twin-engined bombers approached quickly from out of the morning sun. They were painted green with huge, red stars on their wings and tail fins. They flew in close formation, definitely heading for the port of Constanța.

"Prepare to attack!"

The Staffeln moved into firing position. I cocked my weapons, checked the reflector sight again, and was the first to reach the end of the bomber stream. A brief press on my firing buttons and a burst of fire bored into the closest machine. It caught fire immediately and veered out of formation. Square parachutes opened up and floated toward the sea. I attacked again.

8. Seenot will soon receive its insignia: the vanquished death.

Later in the war, to spend their free time, german flyers will carve it in wooden shield. Some are still detained by pilots. On the left, the shield made by Lt. LANGE; on the right, the one carved by Uffz. GOSEPATH (collections LANGE and GOSEPATH)

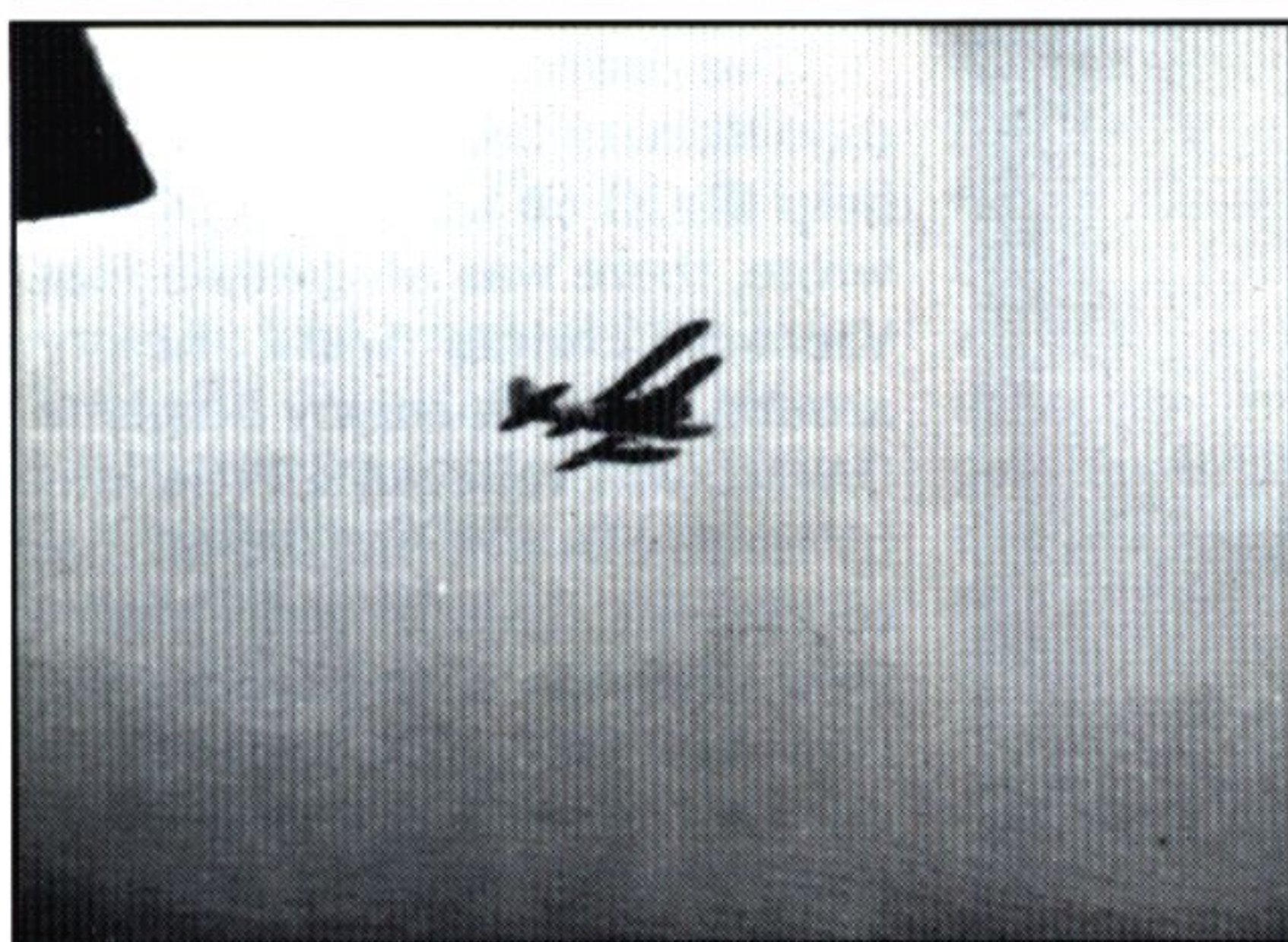
The second one caught fire. There was chaos all around me. Messerschmitts swarmed round the russian bombers. One after another they fell into the sea. The air was full of burning bombers and white parachutes. Only then did I notice that russian warships were also attacking Constanța harbour. They ran into a romanian minefield and one exploded in an inferno. Enormous shock waves buffeted my aircraft. At the end of the battle almost all of the soviet bombers had been shot down. We hadn't lost a single machine. One pilot had to make a belly landing. His undercarriage was stuck and refused to come down despite all his efforts to dislodge it."



The 8. Seenot was active that day. Heinkel DA+ML prepared to help III./JG 52 but, as DICKFELD wrote, there was no german loss. Victory claims were heavy: around fourteen enemy bombers. DA+ML was relieved a little later by He 59 SD+WH, but DA+ML had to take off again to search for a flyer who was seen parachuting. However, the parachutist could not be found. A call then came from Ziliștea. He 111 P (W.Nr. 1646) 1G+EM of crashed in the Black Sea. All searches were in vain! The Seenot had more luck sending five Heinkels in ten missions to rescue the sailors of the sunken soviet flotilla leader Moskva. After shelling various installations in Constanța, the Moskva and Kharkov had come under return fire from romanian destroyers and german coastal and railway artillery. In avoiding their salvoes, the Moskva ran onto an unknown romanian mine barrage mine laid a few days before the outbreak of war. The Moskva sank instantly. Forty-one sailors were rescued by He 59s.

For fear of mines, the romanian Navy could not intervene but nevertheless 26 sailors could be saved by the torpedo boats Viforul and Vijelia. Two soviet sailors could swim to the strand and, among the 69 men rescued that day, there were some airmen





A He 59 of 8. Seenot searches a lost crew (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

An Arado 196 comes back at dawn. Seenotzentrale XII will receive three of those valuable floatplanes on 23rd July 1941. They will be used mainly for reconnaissance duties and to fight soviet submarines.

including Lt. A. CIOBANOV who spoke fluently romanian. That day, 3./Flak 254 claimed another DB-3 above Constanța. Romanian seaplanes spotted soviet ships at 5.50H E of Tuzla and two more at 6.40 H 30 miles E of Mamaia (so on the sides of romanian coast!). They encountered three soviet seaplanes E of Sf. Gheorghe.

As the soviet troops launched a diversion attack against Chilia crossing the Danube river, the romanian seaplanes are called to bomb and strafe them. Supported by the fire of two monitors (the special ships used on the Danube), six seaplanes and six IAR 80s bomb and machine-gun the enemy. For those missions, the Savoia S 55s are loaded with 50 bombs of 17 kgs designed against the infantry. Losses are so heavy that the soviet troops will retreat and leave the new-gained bridgehead.

In the evening of 26th, Lt. Dimitriu CHIRILA and his crew are forced to land on the sea, 50 miles E of Burgaz. Their Cant 501 Z is victim of mechanical problems. Using the engines slip covers as sails, the flyers manage to come back at Constanța during the night...

In the morning of the 27th, at 5.00 H, new alert and a He 59 starts to help the future victims of the fighting. But it is a false alert. After its high losses, the soviet airforce stops all activity

against the romanian coast. The He 59s are then sent to visit one more time the wreck of the Moskva - but there is no more survivors - and search for a romanian sea plane claimed lost the preceeding day. In fact, the missing plane was saved. (Lt. D. CHIRILA's Cant 501Z).

In the afternoon, a meeting takes place with General Konrad ZANDER. The officer gives new orders. There is not enough planes in the area of the Black Sea and the He 59s of the 8. Seenot have to fly recce missions in the area. They have to survey the coast and to identify the ships, giving information about the movements of the soviet units. It is true that the Aufklärungseinheiten had a limited number of planes and that some of them were already lost; but those new tasks are not liked by the crews of the Seenot. It is possible that the C.O., the Oblt von BUCHHOLZ, has tried to refuse those new missions; but "Befehl ist Befehl" (one order is one order)...

On the 28th June, the Romanians reported in recce missions a soviet gunboat, a tug and two barges on the Oceacov channel of the Danube. After a long mission along the 31.45 meridian, two soviet seaplanes are spotted. The SD+EE takes off to search for a romanian plane presumed lost over the sea. The information was

false - a fact very common in those first days of Barbarossa! The NV+AV and SD+WH execute the first of the recce missions required by the High Command. That day, two officers of the 8. Seenot fly to Ziliștea asking to the IV.Fl.K. to intensify the links with Siutghiol. Quick information are required to improve the air sea rescue. Until that day, the operations are not really successful!

On the 29th June, Romanians explore all the coast from Constanța to Sf. Gheorghe, on a depth of 25 miles into the sea. A tug and a minedredger are discovered near Oceacov. The last ship is attacked and sunk.

The 30th June is the day of the first fighting of the 8. Seenot over the Black Sea... A He 59 is attacked by two similar soviet planes (perhaps MBR-2s). The gunner of the Heinkel can repulse the two agressors.

Another He 59, that time escorted by two Bf 109s (certainly of III./JG 52), brings supply to the islet of Serpilor (the Serpents Island). Serpilor had always been a bone of contention between Russians and Romanians. It was quickly occupied after 22nd June 41. Coming back, the He 59 loads a wounded soldier of the romanian garrison.

Romanian seaplanes execute a recce mission towards Sf. Gheorghe to the 310 meridian. Another mission includes safety

escort of a convoy coming from Bosphorus. Near the Danube mouth a gunboat, a tug and two barges are spotted.

1st of June brought a recce at 45 miles east of Mangalia and Sf. Gheorghe. Several ships and enemy seaplanes are detected.

Around the period, the first camouflage schemes are tested on the romanian seaplanes. The officers committed by the technical service are cdr. Constantin NICOLAU and lt. cdr. eng. Vladimir STÂNGACIU. In the second part of the war, the most interesting camouflage will be applied on the Cant 501s, trying to look like the effect of the light on the waves (using paints as dark and light grey, white and black).

On 1st July, General Alexander LÖHR comes in Siutghiol. The C.O. of IV. Luftflotte visits the base to examine the planes of the Seenotzentrale.

On 3rd July, the He 59 MV+AV is attacked again by two soviet flying boats. At Siutghiol, hearing the SOS, one believes that it is lost. At 5.55 H., the DB+KB (W.Nr. 1823) takes off with an escort of two Bf 109s. But, one more time, the good armament of the He 59 drove the intruders back and the MV+AV comes back safely at

Siutghiol. The three rescue planes are then recalled. Perhaps too confident, the pilot of the DB+KB flies low and, near the Cape Midia (20 km N. of Constanța), the He 59 hits the sea before disintegrating. The pilot (Fw. Heinz TIEDEMANN) and the observator (Lt Helmut SANDGAARD) are killed in the crash. Another casualty is the Ass. Arzt Dr. Otto WAGENNECHT, a medic who was part of the crew for that special mission. The wireless operator (Ogfr. Werner HILDEBRANDT) and the mechanic (Uffz. Franz WIETZNIK) lightly wounded are saved. It is the first loss of the 8. Seenot in the Black Sea. The same day, three soviet bombers come very quickly over the area and nearly undetected drop a few bombs.

On 4th July, Major BAIER comes from Bucharest to see the crash site and investigates about the loss. He then authorizes the recovery of the bodies which are placed in a chapel of rest in the cemetery of Constanța. The three Germans are buried on the 6th July in the presence of german and romanian officers. A romanian military band plays "Ich hatt ein Kamerad".

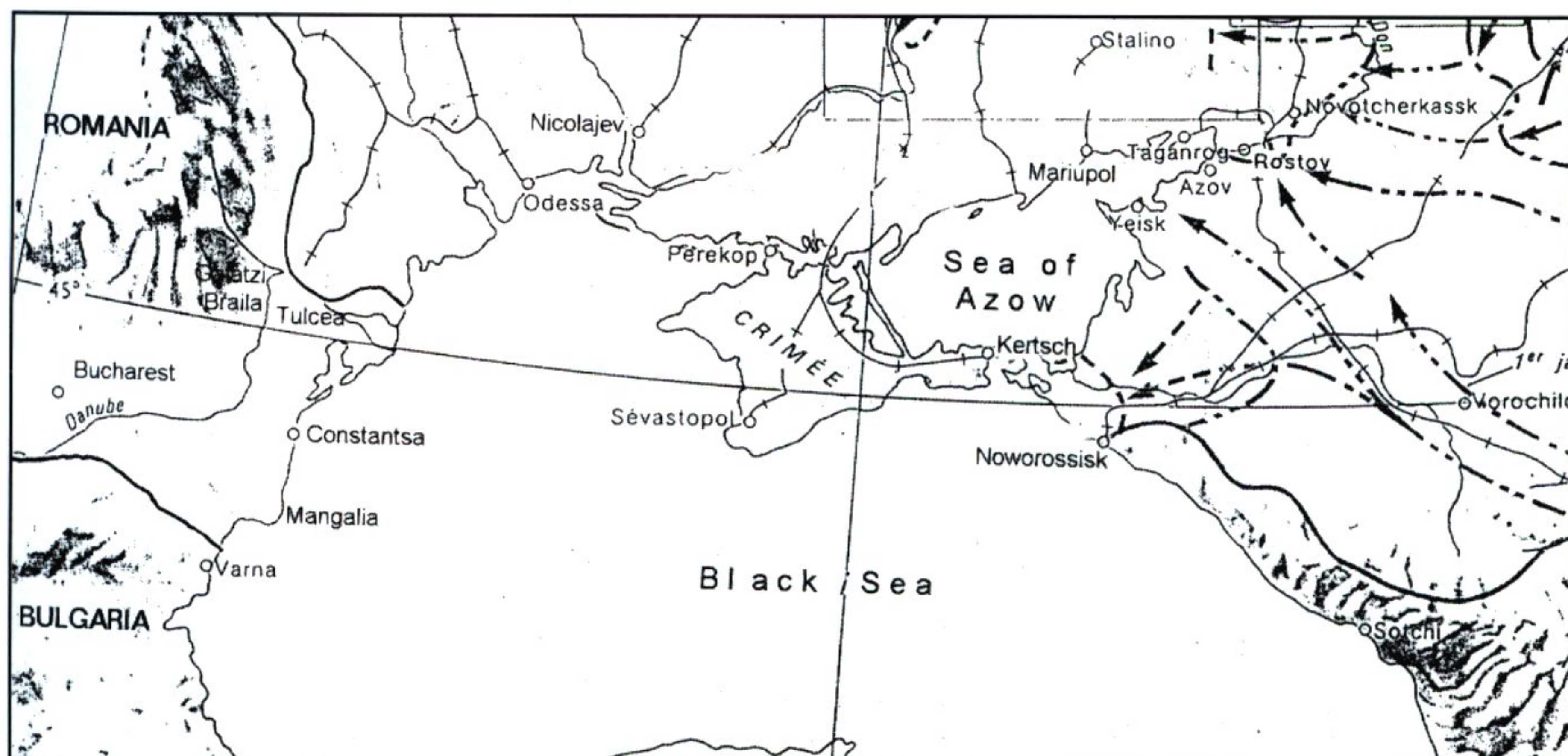
The 8th, at 3.50 H., a single soviet bomber attacks Constanța. He is fired by the Flak but

escapes without damage. In the afternoon, ten other bombers come back on the harbour and bombs fall in the city killing around thirty civilians. That time the Bf 109s of 7./JG 52 take off and claim six DB-3s. A He 59 assisted by the FW 58 TA+NA of the SBK XII searches the survivors but in vain...

On the 9th, the romanian sea rescue unit loses its first plane in a war flight. A Cant 501 of 101 Escadrila takes off at 3.30 H. for a recce but the visibility of the pilot, Cpt. av. Gheorghe RĂDULESCU, is shortened by the sea mist. He makes a too short curve and the plane runs into the waves. It is destroyed. Two flyers are killed; there are three survivors. The german-romanian sea rescue air forces are then reduced to two He 59s (serviceable) and nine Cant 501s (modern planes). To prevent any new soviet intrusion, it is decided to part the recce tasks. In the early morning, a Cant has to survey the area. In the evening, it is the time for the two He 59s to patrol along the coast.

Bad weather pulled away from anchors two romanian seaplanes, bravely recovered during the storm by four soldiers, promoted next day to corporals.

On the 10th July, at 1.20 H., a lone soviet plane drops four



bombs near Mamaia but all fall into the sea. At 4.06 H., the Cant of the morning recce takes off. But its pilot adj. şef Sandu ION, makes the same mistake as his friend of the preceeding day and the plane crashes in the sea killing one crewman. Another

modern plane lost! Another Cant starts then to accomplish the mission of the destroyed plane... In the evening, a He 59 flying along the romanian coast is fired by romanian A.A. guns and MG. No hits are scored and the posts along the coast are warned to



avoid such confusion! The same evening, ten bombs explode in the sea. The Axis advance in USSR is so quick that the IV.Fl.K. moves to the occupied territory. The tasks are then reduced for the Seenotzentrale which must mainly fly recce missions. Romanian recce discover two gunboats, several other barges in Jibrien bay and three monitors in Oceacov bay.

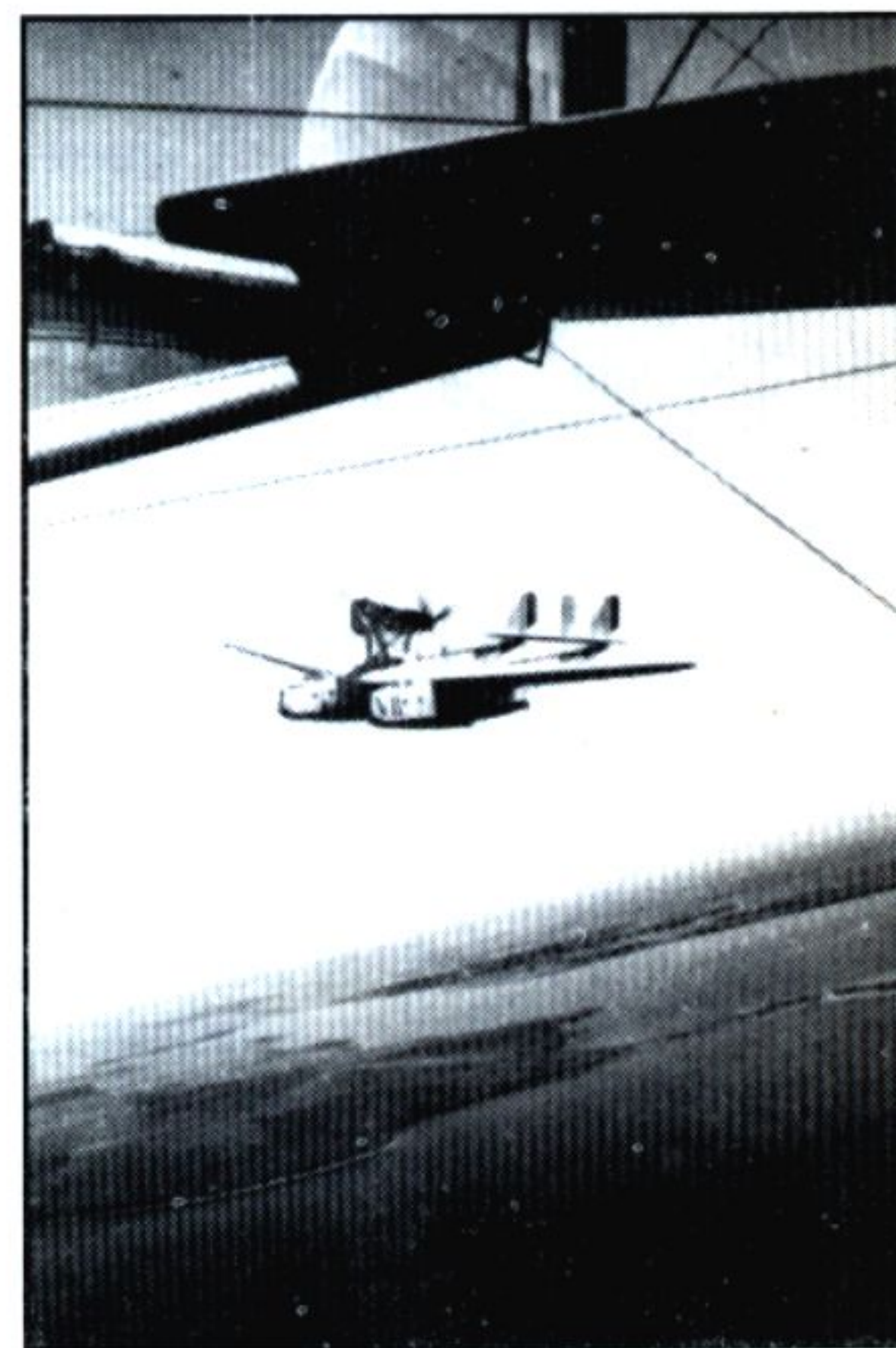
On the 11st, the german unit is reinforced by the first rescue boat. The Fl. Boot 426 enters in

A Bf 109 patrols very low over the Black Sea beaches. In June, the soviet Airforce will lose many planes when facing the Messerschmitts (Douglas PITCAIRN).

End of June, 8. Seenot will meet the first MBR-2s. That soviet float-plane is old but can suffer heavy punishment. In April 1941 a sea-plane of that type landed "accidentally" in Siutghiol. The crew and the plane were returned to USSR by the romanian government, after diplomatic contact. (Gh. PETROV)

Constanța military cemetery. An officer (presumed to be Staffelfkapitän, Oblt von BUCHHOLZ) lays wreath on the grave of fallen comrades. (Gerhard HUTH).

Patrol of romanian S-55s.



Constanța harbour at 14.15 H. The crew has civilian clothes, a proof that the little ship comes from Mediterranean Sea via Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Neutral Turkey prohibits the travel through the Straits for military vessels.

On 12th, leaflets in two languages (romanian-german) are dropped on Constanța/Mamaia by a soviet plane.

The following day, a He 59 is sent to research a lost romanian plane. A Cant is sent over the Danube mouth and finds three monitors, a patrol boat and two small minesweepers. Attacked by the soviet AA the plane has to retreat. The Heinkel is recalled as the missing aircraft is quickly discovered after his landing near Sulina.

The second rescue boat arrives at Constanța on 16th of July. The Nr. 301 comes certainly from Northern Germany.

On 16th, an air fight takes place. A romanian Cant faces two soviet MBR-2s. There is no claim and no loss...

On 18th, new air fighting. The 7./JG 52 is based at Mamaia and Uffz. EBERHARDT of that unit claims two sea planes. Another MBR-2 is circling on the area and the 8. Seenot asks for a fighter escort. The He 59 can rescue four of the six soviet crewmen and bring them back to Mamaia. On the 28th, following the german-romanian agreements, those POW's are delivered to the romanian authorities. In that rescue action, following bad weather, the two floaters of the He 59 were damaged and the plane has to be repaired, being out of action for some days.

On 19th, the romanian seaplanes are heavily engaged. Three planes fly to the East and two other ones over the Danube Delta. They spot two soviet seaplanes SSE of Constanța, two torpedo boats four miles SE of Oceacov, one destroyer with one monitor and four small transport ships ten miles E of Oceacov. That day, the 8. Seenot receives an order from

IV.Fl.K. to abandon the recce missions in the near future.

Nevertheless, on 20th, the He 59 SD+WH flies over a convoy of five soviet ships, later attacked with success by german bombers. A romanian Cant encounters two MBR 2s 120 miles E of Constanța and claims one of them shot down. Two minesweepers are spotted moving on full speed to the NW.

On 21st, two more victories for the 7./JG 52. Two SB-2s are shot down. A Bf 109 is damaged by the return fire and dives to the sea east of the Danube Delta. A He 59 is sent to the area; a few moments later, one learns that the plane could land without a problem.

In the evening, He 59 (SD+EE) engaged in one of the last recce mission makes a sea landing after suffering technical problems. The Fl.B. 426 goes underway to help the crew. The wind is high and the waves are dangerous but, endly, the Heinkel can be taken in tow. At 6.45 H the following morning, the Fl.B. 426 enters in the harbour of Constanța with the plane in very good state. Its crew of four is safe.

That 22nd July, two Bf 109s of 7./JG 52 are lost. The Lt Adolf DICKFELD described that day:

"Picket boats reported that soviet flying boats were approaching the coast by night in an effort to mine the harbour. This had to be stopped, cost what it may. We therefore sent out flights of two aircraft each at dawn to search for these rare birds over the Black Sea. It was a case of the famous search for a needle in a haystack. The range of our Messerschmitts was not too great, and it was easy to calculate our chances of success. In my view running into one of these birds was purely a matter of chance. We had no idea what type of flying boat we were dealing with for days we roared up and down the sea like this, wasting time, to say nothing of valuable fuel. But the General Staff in Bucharest was insistent. Franz SCHLOSSER from Linz finally caught up with one of the russian

seaplanes. He was flying high and far out over the sea with his school friend Sepp FERNSEBNER at his side when he spotted something low over the water.

"Franz", called Sepp, "I think there's a ship down to the north of us, but it might be driftwood."

Stare as he might, SCHLOSSER couldn't see a thing. "Where is it?" he asked back.

"Man have you got tomatoes for eyes? I'll lead you to it." FERNSEBNER rolled his Messerschmitt on to its back and dove toward the unidentified object with SCHLOSSER close behind. In no time they were diving at 600 kph. Then they saw it.

"It's a flying boat!" called Sepp over the radio. The pair leveled out low over the water and tracer immediately began flashing past the Messerschmitts. SCHLOSSER was hit.

"I've been hit in the radiator", he screamed. His cockpit filled with the glycol mist. Unable to see, he jettisoned his canopy, pulled up and headed for home. However, moments later his engine stopped. Wanting to avoid a belly landing in the water, he loosened his shoulder and belly straps and leaped from the plunging Messerschmitt. His parachute opened and moments later he landed in the warm sea, more than 100 kilometres from land. FERNSEBNER was horrified. He circled low over SCHLOSSER and signalled that he was going to fly home and send help. Then SCHLOSSER was alone. He was unable to see the Ivan from his small life raft, which he had inflated in the meantime. FERNSEBNER reported the drama by radio long before he reached our airfield. Four aircraft took off for the area where SCHLOSSER had come down. At the same time, a german flying boat took off from Constanța harbour. The unlucky pilot was fished out of the water, but there was not a trace of the russian flying boat, pity. For days we strained our eyes searching for the amphibious Ivans, but no Ivans, no flying boat, no victory."

The Fw. SCHLOSSER was credited in fact with a DB-3 bomber. He was only the 2nd german pilot to be picked up from the Black Sea by Heinkel 59 NV+AV. Nearly one hour before, the same He 59 had taken off to help the Uffz. EBERHARDT victim of an engagement with soviet planes. Both pilots are unwounded and will fly again very soon. Both will claim other victories over the Black Sea.

On the 23rd, a Do 215 (W.Nr. 11) L2+AS of 3./Aufkl.Gr.Ob.d.L. engaged in a recce mission over Sevastopol is attacked around 8.00 H. by soviet fighters. One engine is burning and the crew hurriedly asks for help. The attack takes place too far for the range of the fighters (around 250 km ENE of Constanța). So, two He 59s, one romanian Cant and two others Do 215s (from Bacau) go to the spot. But all come back emptyhanded...

After that disillusion, the Seenotzentrale has the pleasure to see reinforcements. Three Arado 196 (Nr 0087, CK+FB; Nr 0094, CK+FJ and Nr 0097, CK+FL) come from the Aegean Sea. They are detached from the Seeaufklärungsgruppe 126 under the command of the Lt THIELE. The three modern and sturdy planes come to reinforce the recce missions. The He 59s will be mainly devoted to the air-sea rescue.

The romanian Airforce launches four recce missions to the East and another one over the Danube Delta. Several soviet planes are met.

In the morning of that day, three soviet planes drop bombs against Mamaia but without damage. The Red Air Force tries to limit the actions of the 7./JG 52 in that area. And, at 17.55 H, Uffz. RATZLAFF of the JG 52 claims a MBR-2 near Mamaia. A He 59 is quickly called but, as the plane dived in the sea, there are no survivors... On the 26th, three planes-being perhaps soviet fighters-drop bombs on the harbour and the tanks of Constanța. Two german

soldiers are wounded. A little later, an engagement takes place and a german fighter and another soviet plane are lost. Two He 59s take off but cannot find the pilots. It is certain that the missing german flyer was of Ill./JG 52 (but his name is not mentionned in the list of losses). The Fl.B. 301 leaves the harbour to examine the wreck of a soviet bomber claimed shot down by the Flak in the morning. No survivor is found and that is perhaps for that reason that the two units (254/and/3./905) will have to wait some weeks to see endly that SB-2 confirmed and become the 32nd victory of the Flak units in Romania. That day, the Arado 196s fly their first recce mission.

On 26th, romanian seaplanes report two enemy submarines 30 miles E of Constanța. Another one is seen emerging to the surface near Serpilor. Two planes are sent to long distance recce over the sea and a third one flies over the Danube mouth to spot eventual seamines. One monitor and two MBR-2s are discovered. The german-romanian troops free that day Southern Bassarabia and the front moves towards Odessa.

On the 27th, cdr. GEORGESCU asks the help of Major FENGLER. The Soviets defend stubbornly the areas of Odessa and Otschakow. The romanian sea planes are not well armed to defend themselves from the attacking fighters. The romanian officer asks then to see the Ar 196s operating there in place of the romanian planes.

That day, the Cants make three range recce flights to the East. Two other planes are sent over the Danube Delta and a third one flies to Odessa harbour and one light cruiser but encounters strong AA fire.

At 2.00 H, on 29th, the Flak shoots at Constanța to repulse intruding bombers. The Red Airforce remains active and its losses cannot discourage the attacks against the romanian coast. Two hours later, a He 59

takes off to provide an escort for a convoy of three cargos coming from Bosphorus and protected by the bulgarian Navy until the end of the bulgarian territorial waters. The flying boats will take turns. In the evening, an Ar 196 comes back from his first mission over Odessa. Its crew declares that the mouth of the harbour is protected by defence vessels. The two bombs of the Arado were dropped but did not explode!

Romanian Air Command promulgates order no. 2896/ 1941 asking seaplanes operations for the Oceacov-Odessa area. Five recces are made that day and three escort missions for a convoy going to Bosphorus. Between the Dnestr mouth and Odessa, picket ships (one every twelve miles) are discovered.

On 30th July, material is sent to the harbour of Varna (Bulgaria) to establish a second base for the Seenotzentrale.

And, on that day, the 7./JG 52 leaves Mamaia. With the rest of the Illrd Gruppe, the Staffel flies to USSR. The Ill./JG 52 equipped with the modern Bf 109 F "Friedrich" is needless on the romanian coast. The opponents are scarce and of little value. As the Luftwaffe fights against a stubborn Red Airforce over the soviet soil, all the modern planes are called to the front line.

On 31st, early in the morning, one of the two romanian seaplanes sent for the recce missions spots four soviet destroyers (type 7) E Constanța. They are spaced at view-contact limit.

As an answer to the german transfer, on 1st August at 13.30 H, Constanța suffers a heavy attack. Seven bombers drop twelve bombs destroying a tank. A second one can be saved. Two ships are damaged and two german Flak soldiers are wounded.

For some days, members of He 59 had discovered mine fields around the islet of Serpilor. Could they be mines dropped by soviet planes to hinder the axis traffic in that area? The romanian high

command is doubtful. So many mines! A He 59 is then sent to the spot to find that the mines are in fact... jellyfishes very common in those waters... On the 2nd of August, the inhabitants of Mamaia hear again the roarings of Bf 109 engines. The I./LG 2 left Jassy on 18th July 1941 and came to Ziliştea. After some days, the unit is parted. The I./LG 2 (under the command of Oblt Erwin CLAUSEN) relieves the 7./JG 52 at Mamaia (on 2nd August) while the two other Staffeln are parted between Bucharest and Mizil. The day of arrival, at 18.35 H, three soviet bombers attack one more time Constanța. Ten bombs fall in the sea but splinters of two other projectiles damage the Fl.B. 301. The Bf 109 Es of I./LG 2 scramble... too late to intercept the intruders...

In the evening, at 19.00 H, people on the strand of Mamaia see a diving romanian fighter. It enters the water at around 500 m off the coast. A boat and a He 59 are sent to the spot; one doubts to find the pilot and, indeed, no survivor will be saved.

The 3rd August sees the first successes of the I./LG 2. At 13.40 H, the pilots scramble. Two He 59s start to help the victims of the future fighting. They will be useful. Fw. SCHEIB collides with a DB-3 near Mamaia and must spring. He can climb in his dinghy and burn a smoke cartridge. The Heinkel DA+ML makes a sea landing near him and brings him back to Siutghiol. That quick rescue is appreciated by the pilots of I./LG 2 and gives them confidence. The diary mentions that, until that date, all the pilots of Bf 109 were rescued (only the one of 26th of July who seemed to have been killed before the crash). Five victories are claimed: the DB-3 of

SCHEIB; another DB-3 for Uffz. SCHLEIFF and three SB-2s (Lt Günther HANNAK, Oblt Erwin CLAUSEN and Lt Friedrich GEIS-SHARDT - all three will later receive the Knight's Cross but only HANNAK will see the end of the war, as POW!). That 3rd August, a FW 58 of the SBK XII sent to the area came back after an attack... by three soviet bombers! The other He 59, the NV+AV, cannot find any survivors of the crewmen of the six bombers lost in the area. In fact, later, the claims of the "Jäger" will be reduced to five, two other victories being given to the romanian fighters and two more to the Flak units (batteries of the Flak 254 and 905).

On 4th August, General Wilhelm SPEIDEL, C.O. of the DLM Rumänien, pays a visit to the quarters of the SBK XII. He talks with officers and men and learns how the sea rescue unit operated. And, the same afternoon, the unit can "show the real thing". Two Ar 196s (CK+FI and CK+FB) start both for a common recce mission. They engage and destroy two MBR-2s. The soviet flying boat is no match against the sturdy Arado with its good armament! The Germans drop a dinghy to help the unlucky crewmen. The He 59 DA+ML lands near the crash site and saves two soviet flyers. Those two flying boats are

the first victories of the Ar 196s in the Black Sea. Two romanian recce. missions discover three destroyers, two torpedoboats of the "Storm" class, one mine layer, all proceeding at low speed SE, 28 miles east of Odessa. Soviet sea-planes are very active in the Sevastopol area.

On 5th, Constanța suffers two soviet attacks:

- at 8.50 H, twenty bombs fall in the sea, the attacking planes being repulsed by the Flak;

- at 12.39 H, part of twenty-five bombs hit the harbour damaging a barge. During those two actions, the He 59s take off but there is no fighting and no loss for the german fighters.

The following days are days of routine:reconnaissances (a few soviet submarines are spotted), escorts of convoys (a He 59 must land at Varna short of petrol after a flight to Bosphorus). One Cant is forced by bad weather to abandon mission and land at Sulina. Return to base in the afternoon. One destroyer of the Bezposhchadny (Merciless) type is discovered proceeding route NE, 16 miles SSE of Odessa. It was chased for 25 minutes but suffered no damage. Five miles east of Bugaz, two Catalinas attack a Cant. Machine-gun fire on both sides, with no results.

Mid-July, I./LG 2 leaves the Eastern Front to be parted in Romania. Here, a Bf 109 E of 2nd Staffel. That unit is based near Bucharest when 1st Staffel operated over the Black Sea (Walter FUSS).



On 9th, the Fl.B. 301 is slightly damaged after colliding with a wreck under the water. Romanian Cants are very active that day. They spot a soviet submarine 30 miles off Sf. Gheorghe (it dived very quickly) and another one 20 miles ESE of Sulina. When flying over a destroyer and two stopped torpedoboats 25 miles off Bugaz, a Cant comes under the fire of heavy AA but escapes without damage. 70 miles E of Midia, two Catalinas are encountered but the two flying boats can evade. At 17 miles NE Bugaz, a "Frunze" class cruiser stopped is also discovered.

On 10th August, new loss for the 8. Seenot. The He 59 DA+ML (W.Nr. 931) comes back at Siutghiol at 21.30 H. The crew flew before to Varna bringing there a specialist of the signal troops.

When the plane is approaching its romanian base, a storm starts and the landing becomes very difficult. At 22.00 H, Captain Ivan MARIN of the romanian sea rescue unit warns his german counterpart that a seaplane made a landing between Mamaia and Constanța. A romanian A.A. unit saw distress signals off the coast. The searches begin but are hampered by the night and the bad

weather. The following day, the Fl.B. 426 comes back with the remains of two floaters... The DA+ML is the 2nd loss of the 8. Seenot. The four flyers:

- pilot: Fw. Alex BLANKENBURG;

- observer: Lt. Kurt SPALTEHOLZ;

- mechanic: Ofw. Johannes MAHLER and

- wireless operator: Uffz. Otto THÄSLER will be buried in Constanța military cemetery.

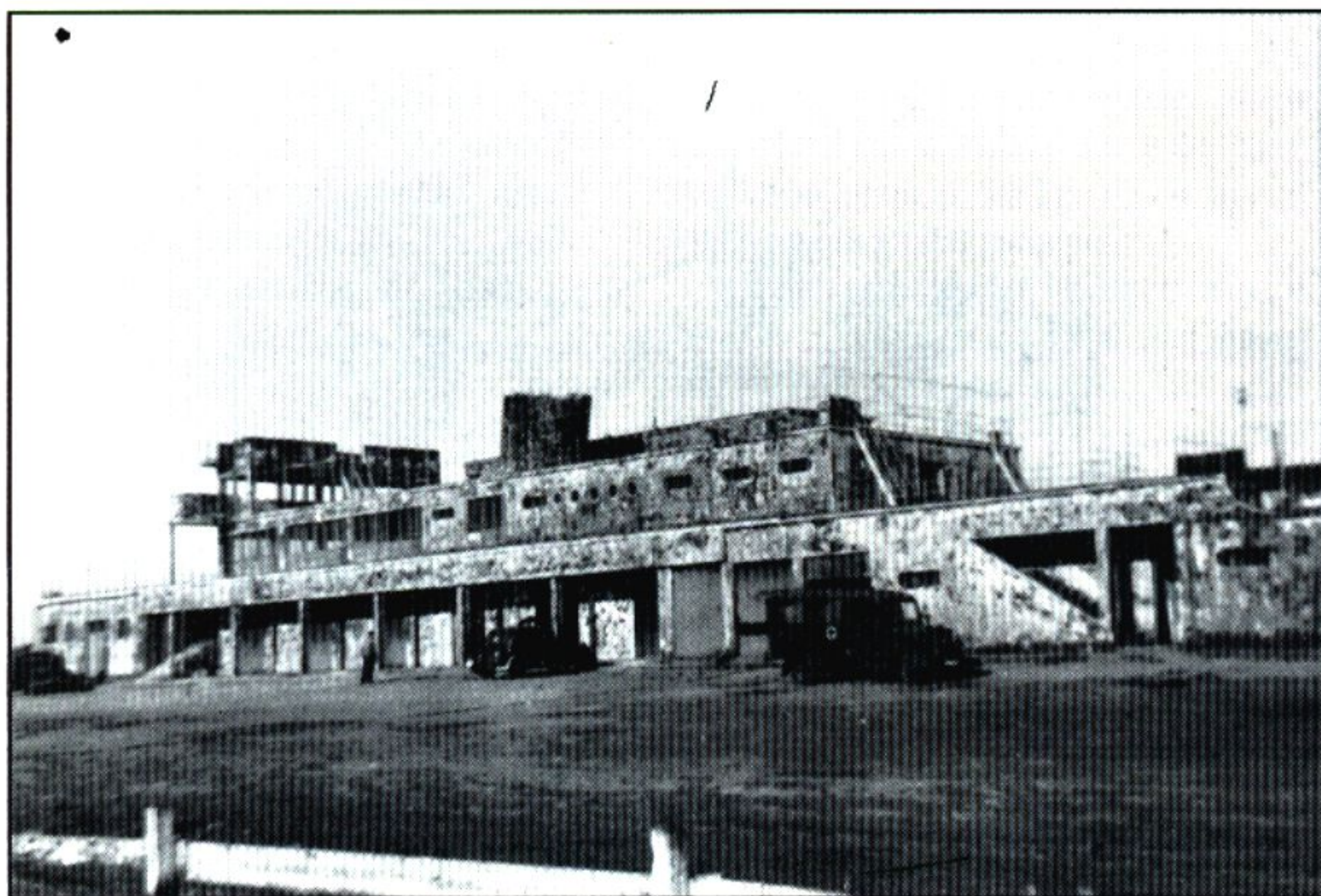
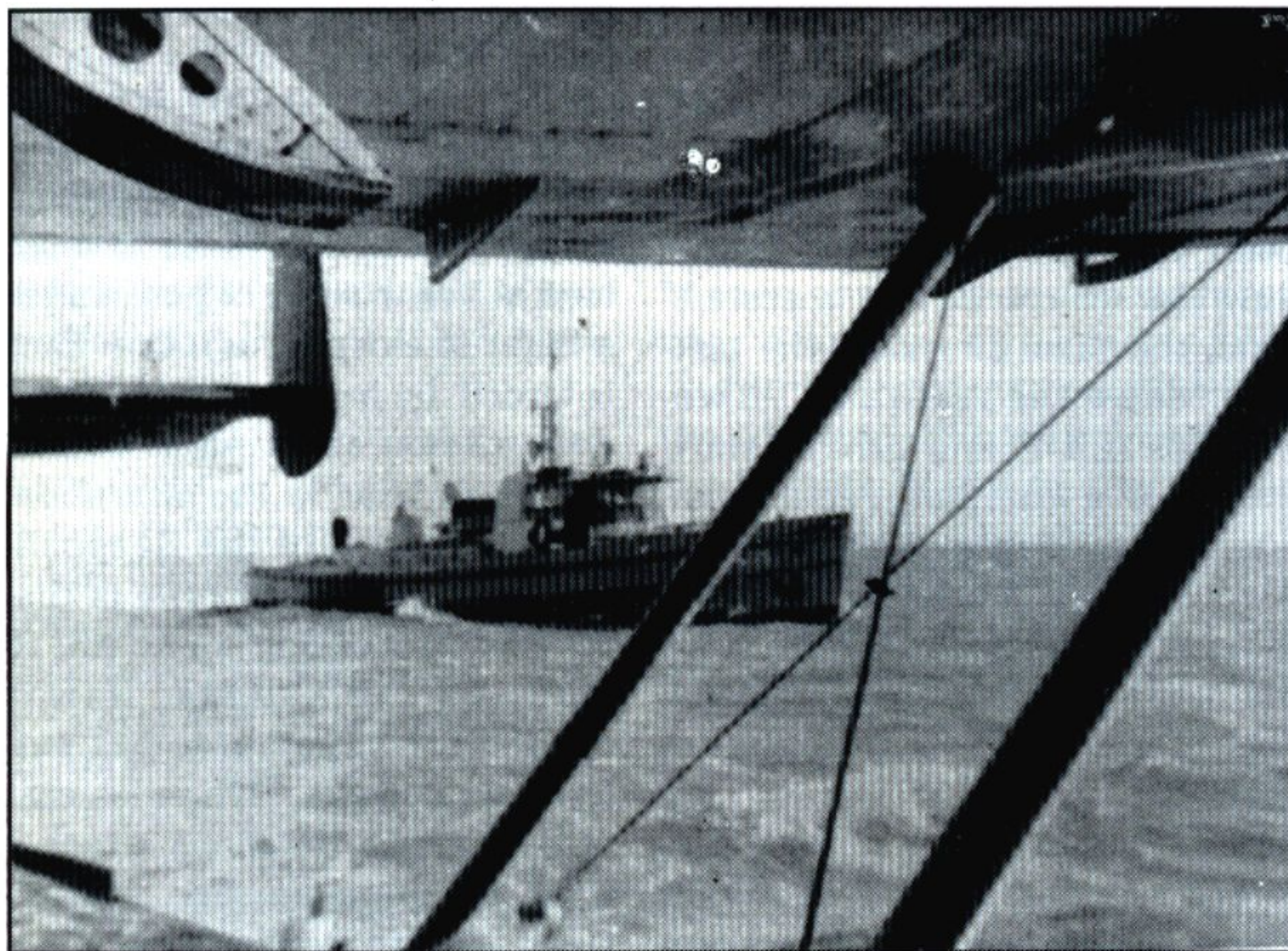
The same day, three recce mission are launched with romanian Cants. They spot two bombers 35 miles E of Bugaz. When encountering two MBR-2s, they chase them for 15 minutes but cannot score a hit. The romanian flyers report a soviet destroyer escorting a cruiser (with presumably engine problems) 30 miles E of Lake Sagani. The following day when flying to the East, a Cant sees two Catalinas floating near Mamaia. The same day, six other enemy planes are spotted by three different Cants. That 12nd, General ZANDER and Major MATTHES meet to talk about the dramatical event of the 10th and organize the future operations.

On the 12nd, General ZANDER and Major MATTHES meet to talk about the dramatical event of the 10th and organize the future operations.

On the 13rd, soviet bombers strike again. At 1.18 H six planes drop bombs but in the sea. At 04.30 H, three two-engined planes come 26 km E of Constanța to drop sea mines. 1./LG 2 can start that time and Stabsfeldwebel Helmut GOEDERT is credited with a SB-2 (his 5th victory). The two He 59s sent to the spot cannot find survivors.

Fl.B. 426 photographed from a Dornier 24. That vessel will remain until 1944 in the Black Sea (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

On the Siutghiol lake banks is that strange building, a concrete ship. (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



In that night of 14/15, a lone soviet flying boat drops two bombs near the mouth of the harbour of Constanța (00.48 H). It is told that it crashed a little later 47 km E of Constanța. A He 59 is called to the area and lands near the spot. The crew comes back with a dinghy and a little crate (containing signal cartridges). At 13.35 H, Varna calls Siutghiol asking for help. The cargo SMR PELEȘ sunk torpedoed by the soviet submarine Shch 211. A bulgarian torpedo-boat can rescue a part of the crew. One Fl.A. Boot leaves Constanța to rescue five other men and give help to three others who could swim to firm ground. A He 59 rescues the Ogfr. BAREIN, soldier in a MG unit.

The 16th of August sees a new soviet attack: around twenty bombs dropped by eight planes. Five fall in the city of Constanța damaging artillery barracks.

At 9.00 H, Siutghiol receives the following message: neutral Turkey is ready to shout against all plane (german or soviet) flying over its territory. German H.Q. asks to the crewmen to respect the turkish territorial waters (area of six miles off the coast).

A soviet submarine having been located near the site of the wrecked ship, two Arado 196s fly to the spot and attack. The submarine is claimed destroyed...

On that 16 August 41 an important reinforcement comes with the shape of a Dornier 24. The KK+UM

Constanța cemetery. German and romanian officers give a last salute to comrades (fifth from left must be Oblt von BUCHHOLZ, St.K. of 8. Seenot). 8. Seenot loses a second He 59 on 10th August 41 (Gerhard HUTH).

A Dornier 24 at Siutghiol. 8. Seenot receives its first Do 24 (KK+UM) on 16th August 41. That modern plane will slowly supplant the He 59s (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

Constanța harbour as seen from a Do 24 (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



(W.Nr. 17) is the first flying boat of that type operating in the Black Sea. Slowly that modern plane will replace the true but old He 59.

On the following day, bombers come again on Constanța but, that time, with an escort of Polikarpov I-15s. Two romanian soldiers are wounded by bombs in their quarters. Around 4.30 H, a He 59 and a FW 58 of the SBK XII take off. It is reported that a I-15 was shot down 40 km N.E. of Constanța. The He 59 goes to the area but finds nothing... In fact, two fighters are claimed by the Oblt CLAUSEN and Fw. FRANTZEN. They were shot as they flew very low on the sea (around 5 meters!). They burned immediately and crashed a few seconds later. So it was impossible that someone could survive! Romanian fighters claim another I-15 thirty kilometers S.E. Serpilor. The impact was the same and it is unnecessary to send a rescue plane. Nevertheless a Savoia arrives on the spot to come back with empty-hands... The same for a He 59 going to investigate the area where crashed a bomber claimed by the Flak. That 17th, romanian planes survey the romanian shore from Portița to Mangalia and detect several mines (presumed dropped by the Soviets). They spot a cargo near Odessa and a torpedoboat, E of Bugaz. An anchored tanker is noted 10 miles S of Liman Dnepr. Odessa harbour is naturally one of the main targets. The Cant sent over that important city can discover a cruiser of the "Komintern" class and a destroyer before coming under the fire of an AA battery shooting about 100 round. The romanian plane is not hit and its crew spots a new mine field in the area.

On the 18th, a soviet plane flies over Constanța on the way to Cernavoda (1.15 H); perhaps a recce plane? Around 17.00 H, the Ar 196 CK+FB sights a submarine and attacks it with bombs and machine guns. It is claimed damaged.

The romanian recce mission is full of informations. The Cant spots one destroyer 35 miles E of Bugaz, five anchored destroyers 15 miles ESE of Odessa, one cargo and one torpedoboat. Two MBR-2s are seen flying to the North. The romanian flying boat comes back very late and lands in the dusk at Jurilovca flying back next day to Siutghiol.

The following day, at 7.00 H, the He 59 SD+EE starts to see if it is possible to find the trace of the submarine. It is then attacked by two soviet flying boats (MBR-2?) but can escape. A gunner claims one of the opponents. At 9.20 H, the Ar 196 CK+FI calls Siutghiol. Suffering a motor failure, it has to land in the proximity of the enemy. A He 59 and another Arado (escorted by fighters) start quickly. When they are leaving, a new message comes at Siutghiol. A Ju 88 of I./KG 51 has landed on the sea but the crew escaped and floated in the dinghy. A He 59 is sent to the spot. All is well that ends well! At 11.15 H, the Arado CK+FB lands near its damaged comrade and takes the crew on board. At 12.27 H, the He 59 SD+WH rescues the four crewmen of the Ju 88.

The CK+FI is left driving on the sea. The F1.B. sent to take it in tow cannot find it. Night is falling and the little ship comes back to Sulina. It is strafed by soviet planes but can escape and make a stop in the harbour. The attacking e/as are themselves attacked by the Arado CK+FB covering the F1.B. There is no loss.

Romanian seaplanes are very active too! They detect a stopped destroyer 40 miles SE Odessa. A Cant spot a damaged MBR-2 floating 90 miles E of Sf. Gheorghe and strafes it with machine-gun (but seeing no result). A floating dock towed by three tugs is discovered 55 miles of Bugaz. The information is quickly transmitted to the german ally and the dock will be later sunk by Luftwaffe planes.

Another romanian crew can see the attack of two fighters on a stopped soviet torpedoboat five miles SSE Odessa.

That is the summary of a very full day! A good piece of news, nevertheless! At 16.30 H lands at Siutghiol the He 59 NE+TF (W.Nr. 1841) a replacement for the two losses of the unit.

On 20th August, the F1.B. leaves Sulina in the early morning, guided that time by a He 59. The Arado is quickly found. The german soldiers discover that the floaters were damaged by bullets of a strafing MBR-2 and that holes must be filled up before the tow. Around midday, the romanian Captain MARIN reports that a romanian submarine was attacked by a soviet one. The Ar 196 CK+FB starts to bomb the intruder but it will not be found. At the same time, the F1.B. (trying to salvage the CK+FI) calls for help. It was attacked by a Soviet flying boat and asks for fighter escort.

All the day of 21st August sees attempts to tow the CK+FI. One hopes to have a romanian tug but endly the F1.B. can tow the Arado.

Three romanian recce missions discover only one soviet MBR-2. Two of them attack a Cant for seven minutes, 65 miles E of Budachi with no result.

In the early morning of 22nd, a pilot of I./LG 2 claims a MBR-2 around 60 km E of Sf. Gheorghe. The fighters are circling on the spot and ask a rescue plane. But a storm begins and the winds of 70 km/H are too dangerous. Oddly that claim will not be confirmed and we do not know the name of the victorious german pilot... A message is sent to the F1.B. towing the Arado. If the waves are too high, the crew must save its life and leave the plane attached at a floating buoy. But, bravely, the sailors of the Luftwaffe do their duty and enter at 8.00 H in the Tulcea harbour. There, one discovers, that the Ar 196 is too damaged to be repaired! It will be

loaded on a railway wagon in the Braila station and sent to Wiener-Neustadt to be dismantled.

In front of Odessa, the cruiser "Komintern" reacts violently with AA fire to a romanian Cant flying over the area. Two Catalinas are met 70 miles NE Sf. Gheorghe.

On 24th, Ar 196 CK+FB fights against two soviet flying boats when operating in the morning recce. The new Do 24 begins its romanian career by making its first recce mission.

A romanian Cant encounters two soviet Catalinas and is pursued by them, escaping without damage. 70 miles E of Budachi a cargo with its motorboats escort are spotted. That day, there is no movement in Odessa harbour but a patrolling soviet submarine is seen 10 miles E of Sf. Gheorghe.

On the 25th, the 8. Seenot is on the alert. Two romanian fighters made a dog fight with three soviet flying boats near Serpilor. One believes that a plane was shot down but it can land very late.

At the request of the german authorities, the He 59s are temporarily affected one more time to the recce missions. The loss of the Arado and the importance of

those reconnaissance explain that extent of the Heinkels missions.

On the 28th romanian Cants take off in bad weather to perform their recce missions. They spot two unidentified seaplanes 60 miles SE of Odessa, one cargo 18 miles SE Fendra, one motorboat and three bombers. They encounter too some AA fire.

The 29th August, at 16.10 H, the Staffelkapitän of 1./LG 2, the Oblt Erwin CLAUSEN can shoot down two MBR-2s twenty-four kilometers of Sf. Gheorghe. They are the 13rd and 14th victories of the future Knight's Cross Holder. The Heinkel NV+AV can rescue four soviet flyers who will enter in Romanian captivity.

But Cant N° 10 of romanian 101 Escadrila is MIA with all its crew:

- cp. Alexandru BONDARENCO (observer)
- adj. şef Ionică CONSTANTIN (pilot)
- instr. Şerban CRISTEA (W. Op.)
- instr. Adrian MIRON (W. Op.)
- cp Vladimir CIOCAN (air gunner)

Lost without a trace (researches made after the war in soviet archives will be unsuccessful!), it will be the sole roman-

ian Cant destroyed in action (three other ones will be lost but in incidents).

On the 30th, the 8. Seenot receives a new reinforcement. Coming from Athens/Piraeus, the He 59 DD+AX (W.Nr. 1979) lands at Siutghiol at 13.25 H. But, as we will see it later, it will not remain a long time in the Black Sea...

In the few romanian reports saved, we found the report of the operations of Flotila de Hidroaviație from 22nd June to the 1st September 1941:

A. 255 recce missions, (short and long range).

- 48 launched to the coast of Crimea.

- 56 in the northern part of the Black Sea.

- 5 to the coast of Asia Minor.

- remaining patrols were launched to the Centre of the Black Sea or consisted in escorts missions to the Bosphorus.

B/ 53 aerial surveillance patrols

- 7 anti-submarine operations

- 7 anti-submarine escorts.

In all, 1234 flight hours in less than 70 days of war.

Planes used by the 12. SBK from 22nd June to 31st August 1941

Heinkel 59:	DA+ML (Nr 931).	Destroyed on 10th August 1941
	DB+KB (Nr 1823).	Destroyed on 2nd July 1941
	NV+AV (Nr ?)	
	SD+EE (Nr 2865)	
	SD+ML (Nr ?)	
	SD+WH (Nr ?)	
	NE+TF (Nr 1841).	Arrived on 19th August 1941
Dornier 24:	DD+AX (Nr 1979).	Arrived on 30th August 1941
	KK+UV (Nr 17).	Arrived on 16th August 1941
Arado 196:	CK+FB (Nr 87).	Arrived on 23rd Jul. 1941
	CK+FI (Nr 94).	Arrived on 23rd Jul. 1941. Destroyed on 21st Aug. 1941
	CK+FL (Nr 97).	Arrived on 23rd Jul. 1941
	(planes of SAG 125 lent to the Seenotzentrale)	
Focke-Wulf 58:	BB+SD (Nr 58324)	
	TA+NA (Nr. 2732)	

On 31st August 41, the Seenotzentrale has six He 59s, two Ar 196s, one Do 24, two FW 58s and two rescue vessels (F1.B. 301 and 426).

CHAPTER II: FROM SEPTEMBER '41 TO MARCH '42

September '41

On 1st September, a He 59 starts to search for a lost recce Ju 88. The plane-which did not come back the preceding day - will never be found. But the He can spot a romanian flying boat on the sea in the Danube Delta.

On 2nd two Savoias discover five miles ESE Odessa two flotilla leaders of the "Baku" class. The warships are shooting on the shore and the romanian planes strafe them facing heavy AA fire without suffering damages.

On the 3rd, the romanian unit loses a new Cant. The plane (the fourth one) crashes when taking off. That time the crew is only wounded. An Ar 196 is sent, on 4th, to escort romanian mine-laying ships: Amiral Murgescu, Regele Carol I and Dacia. And, the same day, the He 59 DD+AX (which came on 30th August '41) is recalled to Greece (7. Seenot). The Seenotzentrale loses its new floatplane but receives a Ju W 34 (CA+VM, Nr. 2867). The Cants are one more time sent to Odessa. Their passage is saluted by AA fire but the romanian crews can spot two destroyers and several small units anchored in the harbour. Two other Cants are sent in long range recces and meet two MBR-2s 30 miles E of Mangalia. Seven miles ESE of Odessa a destroyer and a torpedoboat at anchor are seen.

To fill the gaps after so many losses, the Aero Dobrodgea sends to Mamaia two new flying boats. They arrive at Siutghiol on 5th September. On 6th, a message is received on the german side of the

Siutghiol Lake. A Go 145 is presumed lost between Tulcea and Brăila. It is on the Danube Delta but, as the crash occurred perhaps on the mainland, 8. Seenot refuses to send a plane. The same day, the unit loses a new aircraft! He 59 NV+AV must remain at Nikolajew under the command of the IV.FI.K. Another Heinkel, SD+WH, flies to Nikolajew to operate from that base; but SD+WH remains a part of the 8. Seenot.

On the 8th, two soviet bombers are seen 100 km East of Constanța. Bf 109s start and a He 59 is sent to support the fighters. But there is no encounter. The following day, in the early morning, around twenty-five bombers come undetected on the romanian coast and bomb Constanța in three waves. The cable of communication between Constanța and Mamaia is destroyed.

The Day Order 535. of the romanian Flotila de Hidroaviație is published to honour the disappeared crew of the Cant nr.10 on 29th of August.

On 10th September, the Do 24 of the 8. Seenot flies a recce mission. At 13.00 H., its crew sees a dinghy. The plane lands but one finds only two bodies of romanian soldiers.

Bad weather permits only to send two romanian recces. The Cants report a destroyer and two torpedoboats 22 miles SE of Odessa. Another torpedoboat is spotted 11 miles SSE of the same harbour.

Next day, weather becomes so bad that all operations must be cancelled.

But, on 13rd, a Savoia is sent to the area Portița/Mangalia where a submarine was sighted. The informations given by the MRR (Romanian Navy) are perhaps false; nothing is seen. A Cant spots three destroyers 35 miles E of Bugaz and two more 20 miles S of Odessa.

In the early hours of the 14th, two lone soviet bombers drop bombs in the Constanța/Mamaia area. All fall in the sea. A few hours later, a He 59 and an Ar 196 are called to help the crew of the Ju 88 A-4 9K+DD (Nr. 1132) of Stab III./KG 51. The plane of Lt Hans SCHMIED attacked a soviet convoy when it was hit by A.A. The bomber plunged in the sea with a 400 km/H speed. It is thus very dubious to find survivors. Indeed, the two rescue planes will come back without sighting anything... More luck for a pilot of I./LG 2. His plane was damaged and the pilot tried to come back to his base. All over the Black Sea, it is assisted by a He 59. Endly, the fighter can land at Mamaia without problem. The soviet attacks against romanian ground become sporadic; the defense can be weakened and 3./LG 2 leaves Mizil to support JG 77 at Berislaw. One Staffel remains nevertheless at Mamaia and the third one at Mizil (to protect Ploiești).

A romanian Cant, sent to the usual recce mission, spots five destroyers, 35 miles E of Bugaz. Three torpedoboats are seen 20 miles S of Odessa proceeding full speed. But the Cant is then attacked by two Catalinas. The

fighting lasts 20 minutes, the romanian flying boat escaping without damage.

On 15th of the month, a soviet submarine is reported to have torpedoed the steamer Schipka, 18 km N. of Varna. A He 59 comes on the spot to rescue the shipwreckeds; an Ar 196 is called to fight against the intruder. But the crew was saved by boats and no submarine is spotted. The Heinkel can take on board one of the sailors who declares that the loss is perhaps caused by a sabotage.

That day, Ar 196 CK+FB leaves Romania to Travemünde for a repair. It will never come back to the Black Sea being later sent to another unit.

The 19th sees a new fighting with soviet bombers. Around 10.00 H, Uffz. REHKOPF of 2./LG 2 claims two DB-3s twenty km E. of Mamaia (another list gives "near Constanța"). A FW 53 of SBK XII starts to drop two dinghies. A soviet flyer is seen climbing in one of them. Around 15.55 H., Uffz. LÜHR (1./LG 2) claims his third victory on a MBR-2 around 70/80 km E. of Constanța. The FW 58 sent to the area will only find an oil patch on the sea... That day, two soviet flyers are rescued. The list of the victories of the fighter units of DLM Rumänien mentions only the two DB-3s (of REHKOPF). It is possible that LÜHR's victory is not confirmed. The list mentions a third victory for the day: a soviet four-engined flying boat claimed by Ofw. Kurt GÖRBING (2./LG 2) near Odessa.

October 1941. In Mamaia, german members of 8. Seenot and SBK XII are invited by their romanian comrades. Contacts are good (but somewhere scarce) between the allies. The Germans are always surprised by the quality of romanian food. Dairy cream, nowhere to be found in Germany after September '39, is very common in Romania...
(cdr. Vladimir STÂNGACIU)

Romanian seaboats (S 62) look in vain for the two soviet bombers signalled by the navy as shot down. No trace. Cant recce finds 25 miles NE of Bugaz a cruiser, five destroyers and two torpedoboats on 300 compass, full speed.

On 20th, 8. Seenot receives endly a new reinforcement: the Do 24 KK+UY (WNR 20) which lands on 15.40 H. That plane is the second one of its type in the Black Sea. The following day, the He 59 PP+AO (WNR 2794) arrives from Athens.

Bad weather prevents recce missions.

In the evening of that 21st, Aero Dobrogea informs the german unit that romanian A.A. guns have by mistake shot against a

flight of six Heinkel 111s. One is shot down, 40 km E. of Walkow (N. of Sulina). The message comes too late and the night prevents all action. In the morning a He 59 is sent to the spot. One quickly learns that there is a mistake! Indeed, all the planes came safely back. The romanian gunners were too "optimistic"...

Two Cants fly long range recce and a Savoia 55 finds a... sailing ship near Bugaz. Seven miles east of Cape Sabla, a submarine is found and bombed under water with eight a.s. grenades of 50 kilos.

On 23rd a Savoia must land six miles S.E. of Mangalia. It can not start again, victim of a technical failure. A Fl. B. cast off but the romanian plane is helped by a



torpedo boat and towed into the harbour of Mangalia. On 29th, ten km W. of Varna, the cargo Supera is torpedoed. A He 59 is sent to rescue the crew but the men are already rescued by little ships. There is only two casualties.

In order N° 573 of Flotila de Hidroaviație, all romanian reserve officers and petty officers are demobilized.

October '41

The month begin with the arrival of an important reinforcement: two Arado 196s (CK+FF, Nr 0091 and CK+FJ, 0095) land at Siutghiol in the evening of 1st October. The following day, CK+FJ is already sent to the Odessa area for a recce mission and is fired by soviet A.A. guns. Proof that the losses of the preceding day restrict those type of operations. In the

afternoon of the 3rd, a Savoia engaged in a recce mission has to land on the Black Sea. Fl.B. 301 is sent to tow the plane. In the meantime, a He 59 can land near its romanian counterpart and take on board three crewmen (the two other ones remain in the plane). The night falls and the rescue will be delayed. At 21.00 H., He 111 1T+LH of 1./KG 26 is reported missing after taking off to Sevastopol. But, a few times later, it safely lands at Ziliștea. The alert is cancelled. In the night, despite the darkness, the Fl.B. can meet the Savoia and take it in tow. In the early hours of the following day, Fl. B. 426 is sent in support. The Savoia can then enter in the Constanța harbour. The boring recce missions are carried on. They are not exempted from danger:

- on 1st, romanian recce planes spot two destroyers anchored 35 miles SE of Odessa and another destroyer on pick up 18 miles NE of Bugaz;

- on 5th, Ar 196 CK+FJ discovers a soviet tug which is bombed and machinegunned;

- on 6th, the crew of CK+FJ fights against a soviet flying boat claimed shot down at 10.15 H. Around 15.00 H, Arado CK+FF is attacked by two ARK-3s. One is seen landing on the sea before it sinks. The other one leaves the area pouring smoke. Its destruction cannot be confirmed, as the german observer has been wounded. The two Dornier 24s are sent to rescue the crewmen. They come back having only sighted some wreck proving that at least one of the planes was lost.

A romanian Savoia signals a submarine between Constanța and Mangalia.

The following day, two recce missions are launched 50 miles E of Constanța and the romanian seaplanes are requested for anti-submarine missions to protect a convoy leaving Constanța to Varna.

On 8th October, He 111 "AP" (perhaps 1T+AP) of 1./KG 28 sends an SOS. It must have landed on an island (apparently Serpilor). He 59 SD+WH starts but too late as Ziliștea informed 8. Seenot that the crew is saved. The He 59 does not nevertheless come back empty-handed; indeed, by chance, its crew sees another Heinkel lost in the area. The four german flyers are members of the 6./KG 26 and one of



When taking off from Constanța harbour, Alfons REMMELBERGER photographed the Regele Ferdinand, a romanian destroyer (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

Do 24 over the Siutghiol hangars (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

them is no more that the Staffelnkapitän, Oblt Horst KRUPKA. 6./KG 26 flies from Buzău in the autumn of '41 to act as torpedo unit against the soviet convoys in the Black Sea. The planes operated mainly against the traffic Odessa-Caucasus. But, in October, the soviet troops evacuated the encircled Odessa. The bombers of 6./KG 26 then flew against the transport ships. The missions are flown at dawn and at dusk always in conjunctions with an "armed recce". The crewmen did not like those difficult operations but, from time to time, the Heinkel 111s could torpedo ships. From October to December, 20.000 BRT are claimed sunk. That 8th October, Horst KRUPKA and his three comrades are victims of the A.A. guns of such a convoy. The St. Kapitän thinks to have sunk one of the vessels and asks that a flying boat go to rescue survivors and attest that victory. But the plane cannot find any trace of a wreck ! At 10.30 H, it is reported that the Heinkel of KG 28 is always floating near Serpilor. One decides to tow it to Sulina to save the most important equipment. But, at 15.15 H, the twin-engined bomber sinks.

At 14.50 H, He 59 PP+AO suffers an engine failure and has to land off the romanian coast. With the remaining engine, it tries to rejoin the strand. Two romanian ships (a patrol and a torpedo boat) come quickly and the crew is taken on board of the motor launch. The plane is then taken in tow to the Varna harbour. The following day, the crew is brought back to Siutghiol, another He 59 coming in the bulgarian town for that purpose. That day, Do 24 KK+UY is suddenly attacked by soviet planes diving from the clouds. Orders are given to avoid

the coasts held by the enemy. Any loss of plane/crew will be disastrous for the Seenotzentrale.

A new station for seaplanes is created at Tuzla on lake Burnas to help the German minesweeping group.

Weather becomes worse with the arrival of the cold winds.

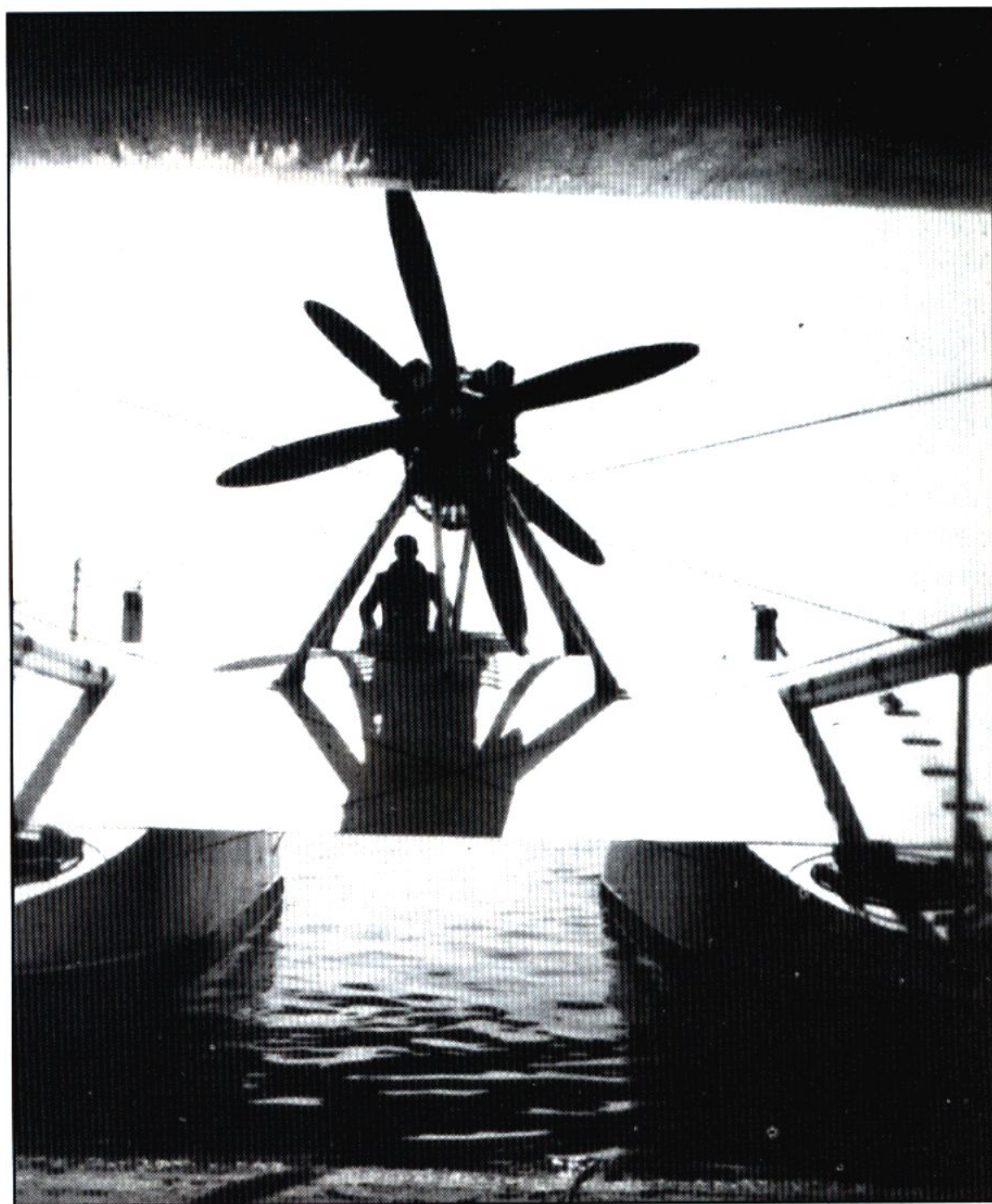
On the 12nd October, I./LG 2 (the two remaining Staffeln) leaves Romania to fly to Tschaplinka in USSR. The few soviet attacks cannot maintain two fighter Squadrons nearly inactive. The Axis troops are engaged in the Crimea fightings and all planes are needed there.

A Cant finds a cargo 17 miles ESE of Odessa and a cruiser going north.

On 14th, two flying boats have to go to Nikolajew and Mariupol

to operate from those bases. The air engagements are heavy and two rescue planes have to be near the area to help the victims of the future dog-fights. The following day, the weather is better and He 59s NE+TF and SD+WH can fly to their new operational bases. The same day, near Mamaia, six bombs fall in the sea.

On 16th, 8. Seenot has a busy day. In the morning, a Do 24 searches the survivors of a "Martin bomber" (=a SB-2) but comes empty-handed. In the afternoon, two soviet bombers (and a third probable) are claimed shot down 40 km E. of Mangalia. Later, the spot is corrected in "50 km N.E. Constanța". Those planes are perhaps victims of romanian fighters which claimed two flying boats (perhaps



The romanian Savoia S-55 will operate in the Black Sea until 1942

soviet Catalinas which operated alongside the MBR-2s). The He 59s of 8. Seenot will search survivors in vain... The same for romanian rescue planes.

Bad weather prevented any long range missions.

More luck for two of the Arados called to attack a submarine sighted near a convoy. They claim some near-misses.

On 15th, the romanian Cants must be revised. They constantly operated in the Black from the beginning of the war. The Savoias then must fly the recce missions devoted to the more modern planes. They spot two destroyers 10 miles SE of Odessa and make two missions 50 miles east Constanța.

The valuable city of Odessa is captured by romanian troops on 16th October. That day, two Savoias escort a convoy.

With the fall of the strategic harbour of Odessa, the Soviets have lost their main seaplane base. So their activity against the romanian shores will be reduced. Very quickly, romanian flying boats leave Siutghiol to land in Odessa harbour. The installations are partly destroyed but can be repaired.

The capture of Odessa does not stop the works to equip the new Tuzla base. On 18th, four Savoias take off from there for anti-submarine patrols.

On 19th, He 59 SD+EE has to end a recce mission and lands on the Black Sea. A Do 24 comes to take on board a part of the crew. One of the propellers has been drawn out. The Seenotzentrale decides to send the Fl. B. 426; but the boat is itself damaged. It is then the turn to the Fl. B. 301. In the meantime, SD+EE can with its sole propeller gain the Sulina harbour. All is well that ends well! The value of each plane of 8. Seenot is attested by the fact that to rescue one of them, two

planes (a Do 24 and an Ar 196) and the two rescue boats are diverted.

On 21st, bad news for the romanian rescue unit. The engines Isotta Fraschini (used by the Cants) are no more manufactured in Italy. It becomes only possible to have some pieces. Perhaps that the Cants could be equipped with the Bramo engines?

On 22nd, new departure. The Arado CK+EL leaves the Black Sea to fly to Travemünde (for repairs). The stops: B. Greaca, Belgrade and Rangsdorf.

At 14.10 H, the Seenotzentrale Mariupol contacts 8. Seenot at Siutghiol. That new air-sea rescue unit is operational but mentions that it works mainly for the pilots of Jagdgeschwader 77 operating in that area.

The german advance forces 8. Seenot to establish advanced bases at Ackermann (the romanian Cetatea Albă) and Odessa.

On 24th, a military barge sinks N. of Cape Midia. 80 soldiers could be drowned. The planes of 8. Seenot start but a tug comes before and can save the shipwreckers.

At that period, weather become more and more worse but cannot prevent the usual missions of the seaplanes.

On the 28 th romanian crewmen with more than 30 war-flights will be decorated. Next day, following bad weather, only the shore patrol mission can be executed.

On 30th October, when PP+AO (repaired at Varna) comes back at Siutghiol with three romanian soldiers wounded on board, the base is visited by Major KRAUSE (of the Kommando Lufttransport) and a pilot of BV 222. They come to see if the lake is suitable for such a giant plane. In the beginning of November, the BV 222 must supply the area of Taganrog and needs a good base for that purpose.

The last day of the the month, romanian Savoias, taking off from Tuzla base, make three anti-submarine escort missions between Odessa and Bugaz.

November '41

The beginning of that month sees two hard losses for 8. Seenot. The unit has to operate farther out of the romanian area. The aerial fightings are bloody and all help is needed.

On 2nd November, He 59 SD+WH is requested to fly to Tendromoskaja. A Ju 52 has been shot down by soviet fighters and there are possible survivors. But the enemy is near the crash spot. SD+WH takes off from its advanced base and will never come back. The following day, the plane with its crew:

- pilot: Uffz. Walter DROSTE;
 - wireless operator: Ogfr. Werner HILDENBRAND;
 - engineer: Fw. Franz WICZNIOK and
 - gunner: Gefr. Rudolf RÜDEL
- are listed as missing. Nothing will be later heard from those men...

On 3rd November, at 8.40 H., Do 24 T-7 KK+UV leaves Siutghiol for Constanța. That plane, the first Dornier in the Black Sea, flew without interruption from the second half of August '41. Its engines are fatigued by those continual operations. New Bramo engines are hastily requested. Two of them recently came in Constanța loaded in a Ju 52. KK+UV will naturally benefit by those arrivals and goes to Constanța to receive the new engines. At 8.55 H., the HQ of Flak 202 sends a message to Siutghiol. The Do 24 crashed at landing and overturned. Boats come quickly near the spot. The plane will later be found destroyed at 70% but all three crewmen:

- pilot: Fw. Karl SCHULZE;
- engineer: Uffz. Hans KREUTZFELD and

- chief engineer (Oberwekmeister): Ofw. Heinrich GUTH are killed.

The three bodies are recovered and will be buried in the Constanța cemetery on 6th November.

Those losses cannot interrupt the operations. On 6th, He 59 NE+TF comes with two soldiers and one wounded. Those three german Landsers are from a flotilla of six barges listed before as missing. An Ar 196 could spot them. Surprised by a sudden storm, the boats has been thrown on the coast. Four soldiers drowned but the remaining men could swim to the strand. The following day, NE+TF comes back to bring supply and a medic for the wounded soldiers.

On 9th, many He 59s are active to rescue the crew of a ship blown up with a load of petrol and munitions. A new Do 24 (KK+VC, WNr 24) comes from Athens as a reinforcement after the recent losses.

On 11th, the 2nd Do 24 of 8. Seenot, the KK+UY, has to fly to Germany to change its engines. After seven weeks of continual rescue missions, the Bramos are damaged. But the travel is too

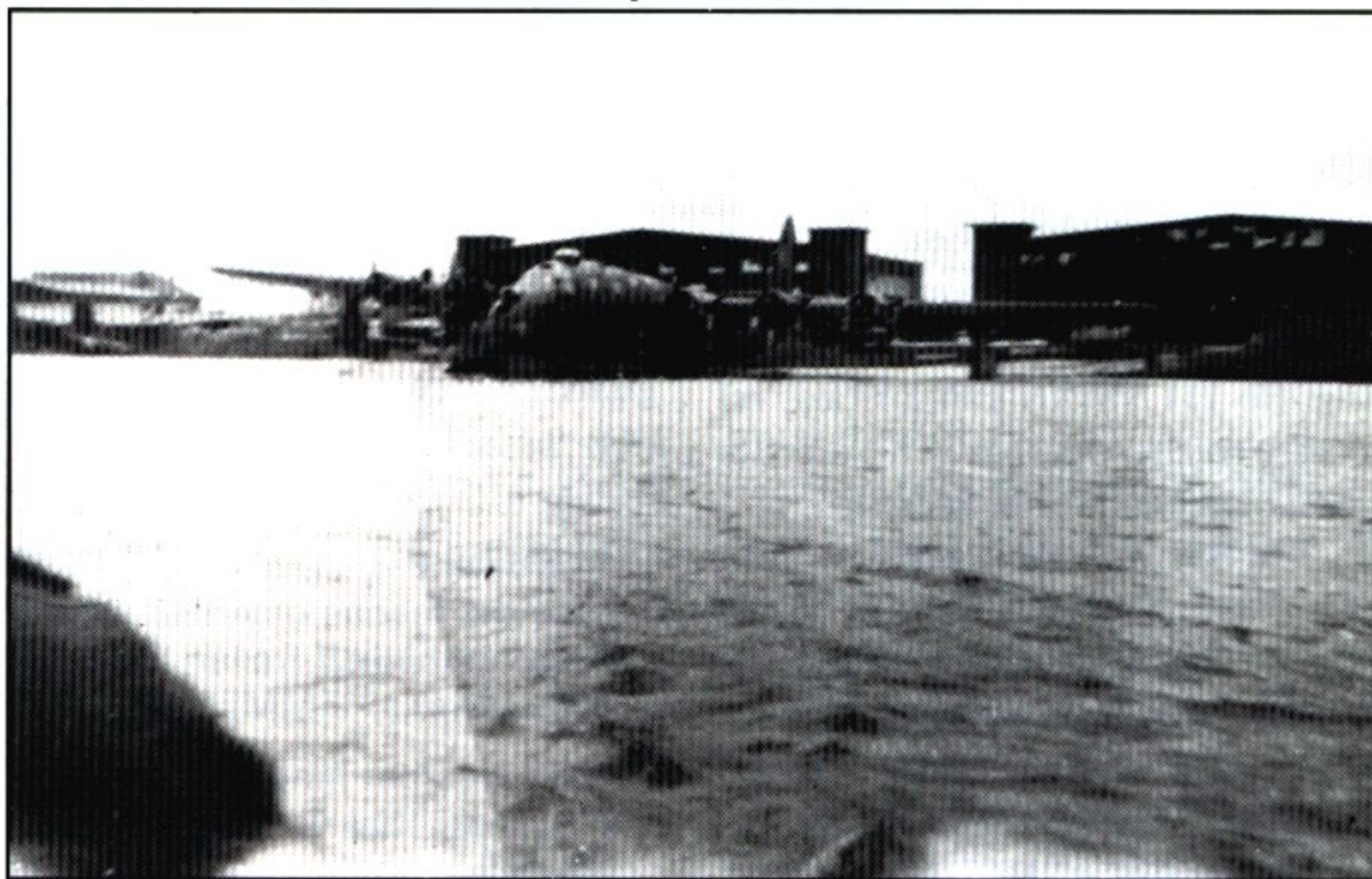
risky and the engines have to be changed on the spot (those Bramos are perhaps the ones expected for the fateful KK+UV!).

The weather was so bad that telephone connections between Siutghiol and Constanța were interrupted. Strong winds and snow, locally called "viscol", stopped any operations.

The weather hinders the operations. On 15th, the recce He 111 cannot start. A barge is thrown on the coast near the Danube Delta; but the crew escapes unhurt and no rescue plane has to be sent. One always waits for the BV 222 C-1 (CC+ER) which has two weeks of delay.

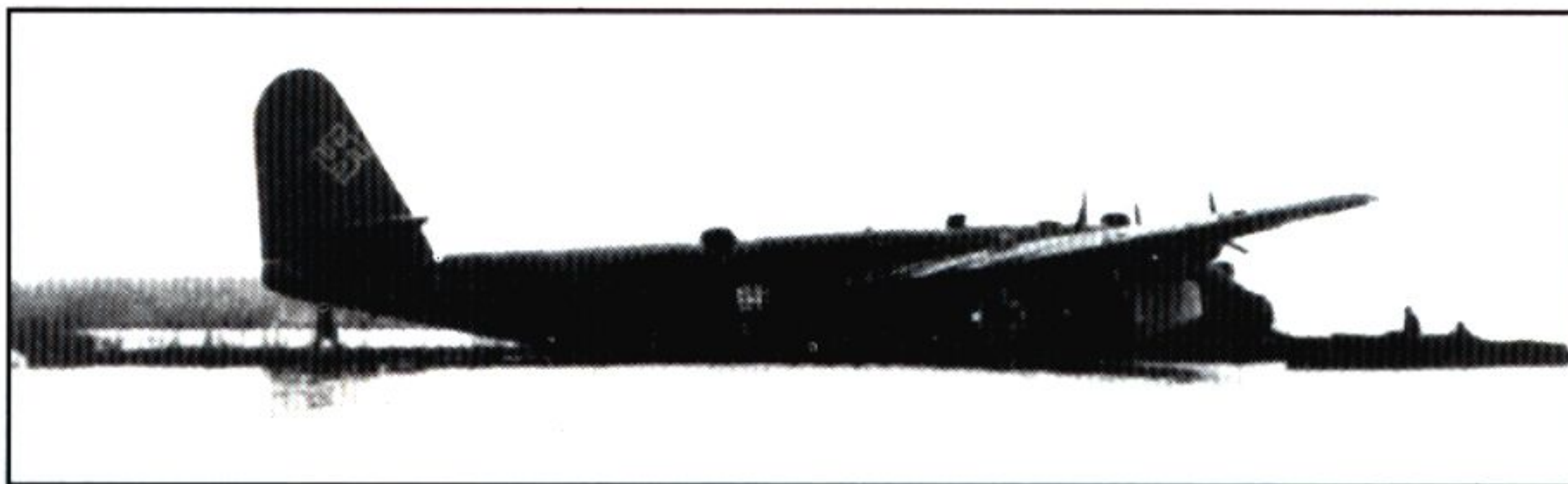
The plane starts from Trave-münde but the icy weather met over Europe forces it to interrupt its travel. The terrible winter 41/42 begins...

The following days, the planes cannot take off. But, on 18th at 15.10 H., the CC+ER lands at Mamaia. It started from Trave-münde at 8.18 H., and has no problems on the way. That unusual plane is very attractive and everybody come to visit it. General ZANDER and Cdr. GEORGESCU (with all his staff !) are the first in the flank of the BV 222. In the evening, bad news ! He 59 SD+ML which is for a time at Taganrog



BV 222 C-1 CC+ER lands on 18th November 41 at Siutghiol (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

That strange plane is photographed by german and romanian soldiers. It will leave Romania on 24th November 41. In the Mediterranean theater, CC+ER will become X4+EH.



cannot start. The floatplane is prisoner of the ice. A new unavailable plane for 8. Seenot...

The following day, the attraction of the BV 222 is great. General ZANDER comes back and many officers of Aero Dobrogea are invited in the "monster". On 20th, the BV 222 starts at 08.00 H. to Nikolajew loaded with eight tons of supply. The plane comes back in Romania at 14.55 H. with 40 wounded soldiers.

The meteorological problems are the same for all units. At Balcic are based the planes of 4./Ob. d.L. Each day its He 111s fly recce missions and 8. Seenot is always warned before to be ready to send help if one of the planes has to land on the Black Sea. On 22nd November, the strength of the unit is reduced to two planes, a third one being unserviceable. The recce operations are only made in the morning; and that same morning, He 111 T5+XH cannot take off owing to the weather. The alert is then cancelled for 8. Seenot.

He 59s and Ar 196s maintain their usual missions. That 22nd, the BV 222 flies a new shuttle. It brings some specialists to Nikolajew and comes back with 69 wounded. Unfortunately, the Seenotzentrale will lose soon its brand-new toy! Indeed, on 18th November, the British VIIIth Army launches Operation Crusader in Africa. The German Afrika Korps needs supplies and the BV 222 C-1 is urgently requested at Phaleron (near Athens) to bring reinforcements from Greece to Africa.

On 23rd, He 111 T5+ZH takes off from Balcic but cannot see anything on Crimea due to the weather and the mist. The plane lands at Constanța for refuelling before going back to Balcic.

On 23rd, Oblt Frhr von BUCHHOLZ leaves 8. Seenot. He will enter in a bomber unit and would have been killed later in the war. The second Staffelkapitän of the unit is Oblt BESTEHORN.

24th November is the day of a great move. At 7.40 H., BV 222 CC+ER leaves Mamaia to land at Phaleron at 9.47 H. It will be the redesigned as X4+EH and will never come back in the Black Sea. He 59s SD+EE and ME+TF fly that day to Varna. One He 59 has to be left at Nikolajew, prisoner of ice. The same danger threatens Siutghiol and it is wiser to send the planes southern. On 29th, the remaining serviceable planes rejoin the two Heinkels in the Bulgarian harbour. But all services remain at Mamaia/Siutghiol and the operations are ordered from Romania by wireless or telex - which is not very easy!

On 30th, it seems impossible to pull He 59 SD+ML out of its ice prison at Taganrog. The crew - more useful in Romania - is called back and the plane left to the guard of a soldier and a mechanic of 8. Seenot.

In November 41, men of SBK XII use the rescue dinghies to hunt ducks on the half-frozen Siutghiol lake (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

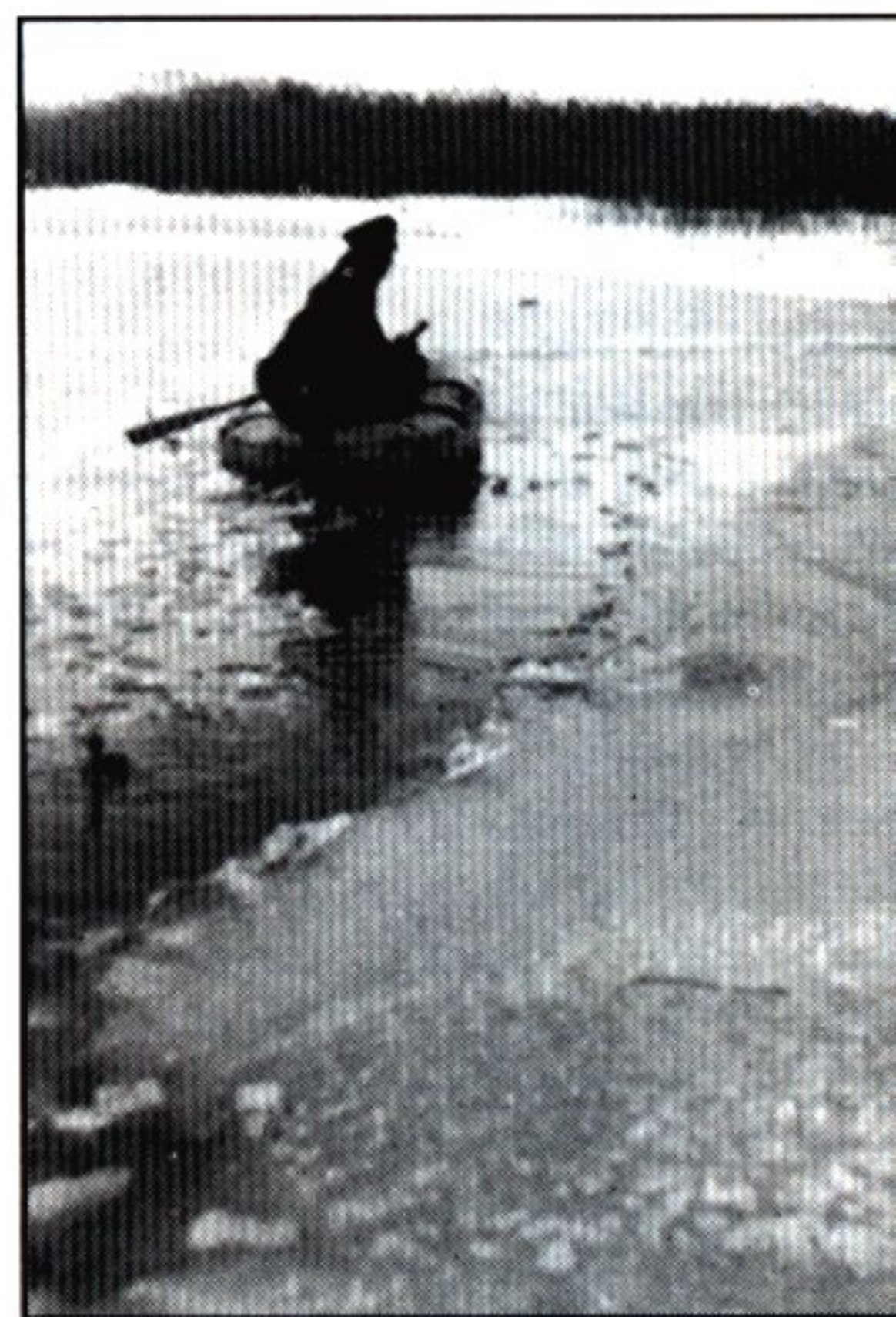
Bad weather hinders the operation. That Ar 196 (CK+FF or CK+FJ) is photographed on 25th November 41 (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

December '41

The first day of the month, Fl. B. 301 leaves Constanța to Varna. When it arrives on 4th, its captain will ask... two new Reichskriegs-sflaggen (war flags). Both were lost en route!

That day, a new German Command appears in the Black Sea. The Fliegerführer Süd is created with, as basis, the Fliegerführer Ostsee. Fl F. Süd remains a part of Luft flotte 4.

In the evening of 2nd, the wireless station of Ackermann (Cetatea Albă) signals that two or three boats are sunk as part of a supply convoy. The following morning, a He 59 flies to the spot but cannot sight anything...



On 5th December, so is the strength of Seenotzentrale:

- at Constanța: Do 24 KK+UY: being repaired (new engines); FW 58 TA+NA (repaired at Bucharest and coming back that day)

- at Varna: Do 24 KK+VC; He 59 NE+TF (serviceable); He 59 PP+AO (with a damaged floater); He 59 SD+EE (which needs some pieces); Ar 196 CK+FF (serviceable); Ar 196 CK+FJ (can fly but its bomb-dropping device must be repaired).

- at Focsani: a FW 58 being repaired

- at Travemünde: Ar 196 CK+FL being revised

- at Taganrog: He 59 SD+ML prisoner of the ice.

On 6th, FW 58 TA+NA flies to Varna and begins its shuttles between Bulgaria and Romania to maintain cohesion between the parted Seenotzentrale.

On 7th December, the romanian Navy lays mines near Mangalia and asks the support of some planes. 8. Seenot is so "miserable" that only He 59 NE+TF can start. But it suffers a motor-failure and has to come back... Then will come a bulgarian plane, an Ar 196 and, in the afternoon... a FW 58!

On 11st, Do 24 KK+UY is repaired and can fly to Varna. He 59 PP+AO comes then in Constanța to repair its damaged floater.

As all planes are needed, General ZANDER meets Major FENGLER to tell that three He 114s remain unemployed at the greek base of Skaramanga. One asks to the SAG 126 to send those planes in the Black Sea where they could be quickly put in action.

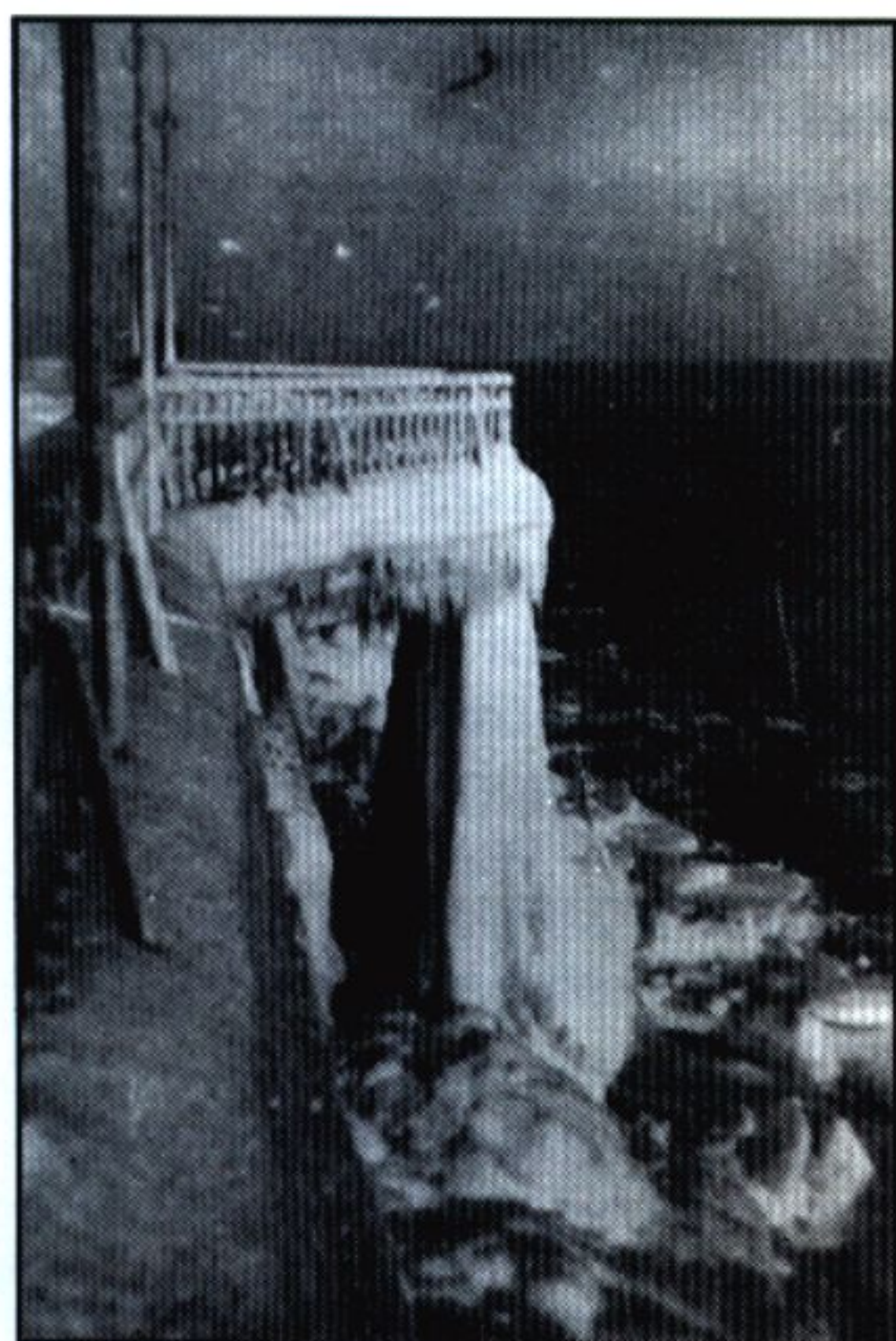
The splitting of the Seenotzentrale is the cause of many

December 41. The Constanța casino seems to be prisoner of snow and ice
(Alfons REMMELBERGER).

problems. For example, when Siutghiol asks on 12th a plane for a recce mission. Varna answers that the only serviceable plane is the Do 24. Is it really urgent? Siutghiol answers that the He 59 must remain at Varna for a possible rescue and that the Do 24 must take off. New message from Bulgaria: following a technical problem, the Dornier can only be ready at 13.00 H. New order from Siutghiol: the Do 24 must start as soon as possible. One learns then from Varna that the crew tried to embark but that the waves are too powerful for the dinghy. The bulgarian navy must lend a little boat and that is only at 14.27 H. that KK+VC can start (with a delay of five hours) in the direction of Crimea. The flying boat goes until 70 km of Sevastopol but... nothing is spotted! On 13rd, the Do 24 cannot start after a mechanical failure. An Ar 196 must then do its duty.

On 16th, the two Ar 196s of the Seenot and the planes of 4./Ob.d.L. in Balcic go under the command of SAG 125. The german High Command tries thus to reinforce and rationalize the reconnaissance planes in the Black Sea area. At the beginning of December, two new units come in the Black Sea: 2./SAG 125 (with Ar 196) and 3./SAG 125 (with the BV 138s, "der fliegender Holzschuh" = the flying sabot). It is dubious if the 2./125 will remain many time in Bulgaria. Indeed, in January '42, the Staffel will move to the Mediterranean. But the BV 138s of 3rd Staffel begin to operate from Varna and later from Siutghiol by better weather. The BV 138s will fly mainly recce missions but also protect convoys. That heavy flying boat will be a serious opponent for the attacking planes of the Red Airforce.

On 18th December, XII. SBKhas its new Kommandeur.





Major FENGLER leaves the Black Sea to enter in Seenotzentrale Holland (Low Countries). The new C.O. is the Major Julius HANSING.

For a time, the Arados remain by SBK XII which needs every plane. At the end of 41, only four aircraft are serviceable. On 19th December, at 20.20 H., the Captain PETRESCU at Tulcea signals that a german three engined plane bringing supply to Odessa hit a cliff at Greci (near Tulcea) at 11.00 H. As the plane crashed on firm ground, 8. Seenot does not send help.

On 24th December, the operational strength of the unit is reduced to three planes, Do 24 KK+UY having troubles with its engines. The missions are then reduced, sometimes one by day; and often the crew cannot see anything due to bad weather.

In the night of 29/30th December, Do 24 KK+UY is a victim of a sudden storm. The three-engined plane sinks with its buoy. KK+UY came in the Black Sea

Insignia of 3./SAG 125 (the BV 138 is nicknamed "the flying sabot").

BV 138 on the Siutghiol lake.
(Dan ANTONIU)



around three months before and is as short-lived as its comrade, KK+UY! Only one Do 24 remains to 8. Seenot. And, at the end of the year '41, the only serviceable plane of SBK XII is a ... FW 58 which has to take off on 30th December to find a little romanian warship claimed missing. The crew cannot spot it and, the following day, the FW 58 cannot start. It is then the turn to bulgarian planes to fly over the area but the Bulgarians have no more chance than the Germans ...

January '42

The winter 41/42 did not see the capture of Moscow. In the Black Sea, the bad weather hinders all activity. On 3rd January, two He 59s (the PP+AO and SD+EE) are endly repaired. They leave Varna for Constanța (and not Siutghiol, the lake being certainly frozen). The following day,

Winter 41/42 is very bad. On 9 March 42, Alfons REMMELBERGER, member of SBK XII, can photograph that storm in Constanța harbour. But soon weather will become better
(Alfons REMMELBERGER).

A romanian IAR 39, a reconnaissance plane very active on the Eastern front (Hans HÖGER).

the romanian seaplane units lose three officers. Indeed, Lt. Victor BĂDESCU, slt. Franklin PETRESCU and Paul NUȚU are detached to Escadrila 22. Based at Odessa, that 22 romanian Squadron is equiped with IAR 39s and belongs to the 5th romanian Army. The three experienced men will serve there as observers. On 7th, Ar 196 CK+FJ is damaged at Constanța when the crane which supported

it is destroyed by a storm. The floatplane suffers damages (25%) but can be repaired. It is nearly the last time that the Ar 196s are mentioned. We can suppose that the two planes always in the Black Sea will be included in 2./SAG 125 and leave Romania in February to go to the Med. False alarm on 9th January! Informations from secret sources predict a soviet diversion landing on the romanian shore.



Siutghiol being frozen no plane can be sent to check the presence of that landing force. In fact, those informations are erroneous... From 11th January, the recce missions are flown by romanian IAR 39s. No german plane is available for those tasks...

General ZANDER has to come in Constanța on 19th. The german officer wants to give decorations to romanian soldiers who distinguished in the first months of the 1941 campaign against Soviet Union. But snow and ice prevent all transport by rail. The ceremony is then reported to the 26th

January. That day, General ZANDER gives sixteen EK II (Iron Cross of 2nd Class) to officers, NCOs and soldiers of the romanian Airforce.

February '42

Bad weather and storm restrict the operations of 8. Seenot. In that month, the sole two rescue boats try rescues but without result.

On the 13rd comes the official order for equipping the seaplane base of Odessa. On the 24th, romanian Airforce promulgates Order N° 809 creating the highest air medal "Virtutea Aeronautică

cu Spade" (Aeronautical Virtue with Swords). The golden Cross Class will be given to all officers, petty officers or mechanics who distinguished themselves in war actions.

March '42

On 9th, the Flugleitung Odessa asks a crew to 8. Seenot. Those men have to fly to Amsterdam (Netherlands) to deliver a plane there to 3. Seenot. Mamaia answers that all men are needed and that it is impossible to divide the crews for such a task.

At that period, weather becomes better and some limited operations are flown. Do 24 KK+UC can be repaired and fly again.

On 14th, a W 34 takes off from Constanța en route to Nikolajew. The crew of two is from SBK XII. It had to stop at Odessa but never landed there. A search is launched. On 16th, two romanian IAR 39s leave Odessa to Constanța. They are parted in the mist and only one lands in Romania. That time, 8. Seenot has to find two lost planes...

On 17th, the Aero Dobrogea finds the wreck of W 34 TI+HL (W.Nr. 1024). In the fuselage destroyed by fire are the bodies of the two crewmen:

- Fw. Werner LINDAUER and
- Ogfr. Friedrich TANK.

The following day, the same Aero Dobrogea signals that lights were seen the preceding night five miles west of Tusla. Indeed a plane sent to the spot can find the missing IAR 39 which landed south of Sf. Gheorghe. The crew is safe and the plane is intact.

On 23 March 1942, weather becomes better and a Do 24 of 8. Seenot can start from Constanța harbour (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

23 March 43. The Do 24 flies over Constanța town (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



On the 18th, Cdr. Constantin GEORGESCU receives the Medal Coroana României (Romanian Crown), 3rd class with Virtutea Militară (military Virtue) ribbon.

The Fl.B. 426 is requested to carry the bodies of the two german casualties. They will be buried at Constanța.

On 23rd, FW 58 BB+SD is damaged by bombs at Saki (20%). It will be repaired at Nikolajew.

On 26th, Ju 88 9K+ER of 7./KG 51 is forced to land on the Black Sea. The landing site is too far for

the Do 24s and 8. Seenot cannot intervene. That day, the Comandament Aero Dobrogea (the romanian command created on 1st January 1941) receives a new denomination: the Comandament Aero-Marină.

On 27th, a He 114 lands at Varna coming from Kavalla (Greece). It seems as that plane is the first of a batch leaving the Mediterranean for the Black Sea. Unused in Greece, the nearly obsolete plane could be employed in the Black Sea facing

the old (but aggressive) soviet planes. But, after contacts with the romanian Air Force, those He 114s will be sold to the romanian ally.

On 28th, a romanian Hurricane is seen diving near Cape Midia. Alert is launched but the pilot can save the plane by landing on the strand.

The month of March ends with a fruitless research for a lost ship. Fl. B. 426 comes back without sighting anything. Certainly a mistake...

Planes used by SBK XII from September 1941 to the end of March 1942

He 59:

- DD+AX (WNr. 1979) Left the area on 4 Sep. '41
- NV+AV (WNr. ?) Given to IV.Fl.K. on 6 Sep. '41
- SD+WH (WNr. ?) Destroyed on 2 Nov. '41
- PP+AO (WNr. 2794) Came on 21 Sep. '41
- SD+EE (WNr. 2865)
- NE+TF (WNr. 1841)
- SD+ML (WNr. ?) Prisoner of the ice at Taganrog from 18 Nov. '41

Do 24:

- KK+UV (WNr. 17) Destroyed on 3 Nov. '41
- KK+UY (WNr. 20) Came on 20 Sep. '41; destroyed on 29/30 Dec. '41
- KK+VC (WNr. 24) Came on 9 Nov. '41

FW 58:

- BB+SD (WNr. 58324)
- TA+NA

W34: CA+VM (WNr. 2367) Came on 4 Sept. '41

The Seenotzentrale has a few other planes used partially by 8. Seenot:

Ar. 196:

- CK+FB (WNr. 0087) Left to Travemünde on 15 Sep. '41
- CK+FL (WNr. 0097) Left to Travemünde on 22 Oct. '41
- CK+FF (WNr. 0091) Came on 1 Oct. '41
- CK+FJ (WNr. 0095) Came on 1 Oct. '41

The two remaining Arado 196s seem to have been included in 2./SAG 125 and leave the Black Sea around February '42.

BV 222 C-1: CC+ER (WNr. ?). Came on 18 Nov. '41 and left to the Mediterranean on 24 Nov. '41 (where it will be redesigned X4+EH).

On 31st March '42, 12. SBK has three He 59s available, one Do 24, two FW 58s, one W 34 and two rescue boats. Another He 59 is useless at Taganrog.

CHAPTER III: FROM APRIL 1942 TO THE END OF JULY 1942

In April '42, good weather permits the normal activities of 8. Seenot in the Black Sea. In USSR the fightings are heavy and the rescue unit has to do its task to save crewmen in danger.

April 1942

On 1st April, so is the strength of SBK XII:

- Constanța: two He 59s (not in flying state), one Do 24 and one FW 58.

- Varna: one Ar 196 (unavailable).

- Ak-Metschet: one He 59.

- Saki: one damaged FW 58.

- Taganrog: one He 59 (always in bad state).

- Fl.B. 426 is ready at Constanța but Fl.B. 301 is repaired at Varna.

The effective of the unit are then very low. The Ar 196 is always included in SBK XII but, in fact, will leave the area after repairing. On 2nd April, the only Do 24 (KK+VC) takes off for its first reconnaissance mission over the sea. With the departure of the Ar 196s, those boring missions

are left to the best flying boat of the area.

On the 31st the lake is not frozen anymore, but bad weather prevents any action.

That day, a romanian Cant flies the first recce mission of the year.

But, soon, SBK XII will be reinforced:

- on 2nd, FW 58 TA+NA lands at Mamaia-Pallas with a new engine (changed at Focșani);

- on the same day, FW 58 BB+SD is considered as repaired at Saki;

- on 6th, a new Dornier 24 comes from Germany. CM+IC (W.Nr. 37) lands that day at Constanța;

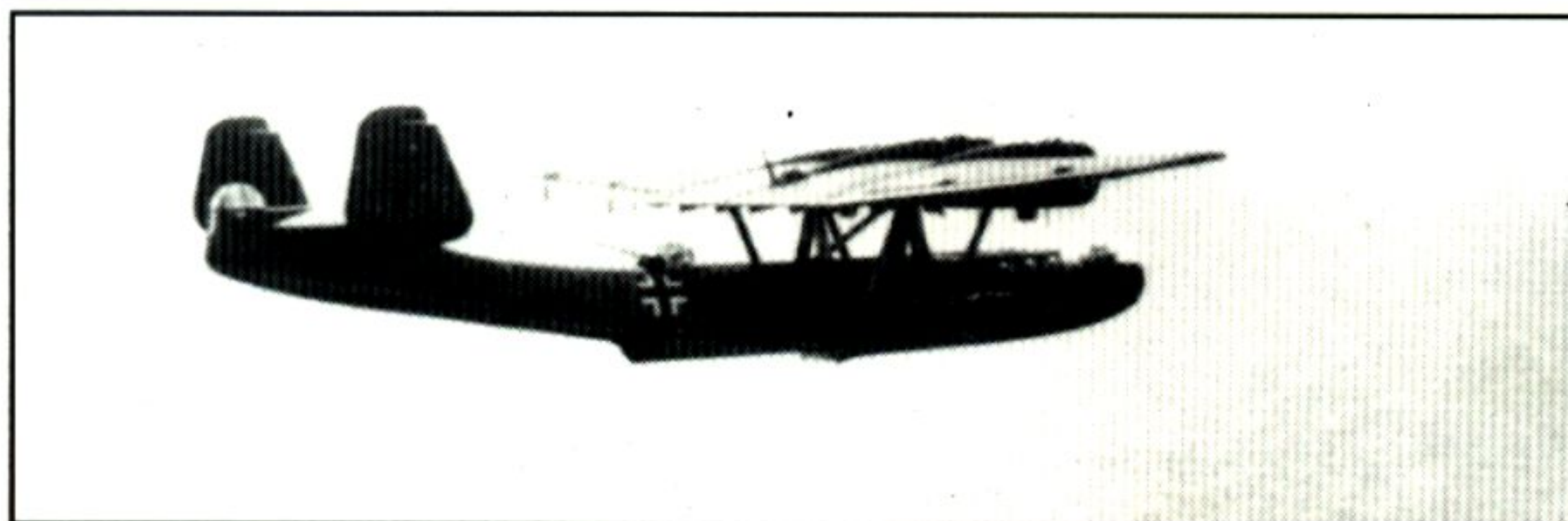
- and, in the evening, the Seenotzentrale learns that three new crews will come from Germany.

- On 7th, new arrival of a plane; Do 24 CM+IG (W.Nr. 41) lands on the Black Sea. The modern Dornier will slowly supplant the old Heinkel.

The He 59s and Do 24s are assembling at Mamaia (Siutghiol).

In April 42, arrival of Do 24 CM+IC in the Black Sea (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

At that period, new crews come to reinforce 8. Seenot. Three pilots are posing at Mamaia-Siutghiol. From 1. to r.: Uffz. Lutz (Ludwig) GOSEPATH, unknown and Lt Werner LANGE (Werner LANGE).



On the 13th a recce is made by a Savoia near the island of Serpilor and Sf. Gheorghe with nothing to report. On 14th April, Do 24 CM+IG flies its first operation in the Black Sea: a research for a Ju 88 of Westa 76 (Nikolajew) which landed on the sea; but without result!

In the evening of the 14th, all the work after the terrible winter 41/42 ends. 8. Seenot is operational!

On 17th, new reinforcement with the arrival from Germany of He 59 DS+KE (WNr. 1981).

Rescue and reconnaissance flights start again. With a handful of planes, 8. Seenot is very busy. The romanian Airforce is very active on 29th. Five planes protect the minelayers Amiral Murgescu and Dacia setting new

mine fields between Sulina and Sf. Gheorghe. Those anti-submarine missions will be repeated next month for the same minelaying operations near Bugaz and Odessa. On 26th, the german floatplanes are requested to save two crews: one of He 111 6N+IH of 1./KG 100 and Savoia 62 N° 17. The german plane is not found; but the romanian flying boat which has to land six km east of Gura Portiței (Danube Delta) is helped and taken in tow by a destroyer.

That day, romanian flyers are requested for an anti-submarine sweep, for a convoy escort (three mission) and one recce 120 miles E of Constanța.

May 1942

On 3rd Aero-Marină sends two planes for recce missions.

Three MBR-2s are met near Limanul Nistrului (100 km ESE of Sulina). Another plane operates against submarine between Constanța and Magalia but nothing is sighted.

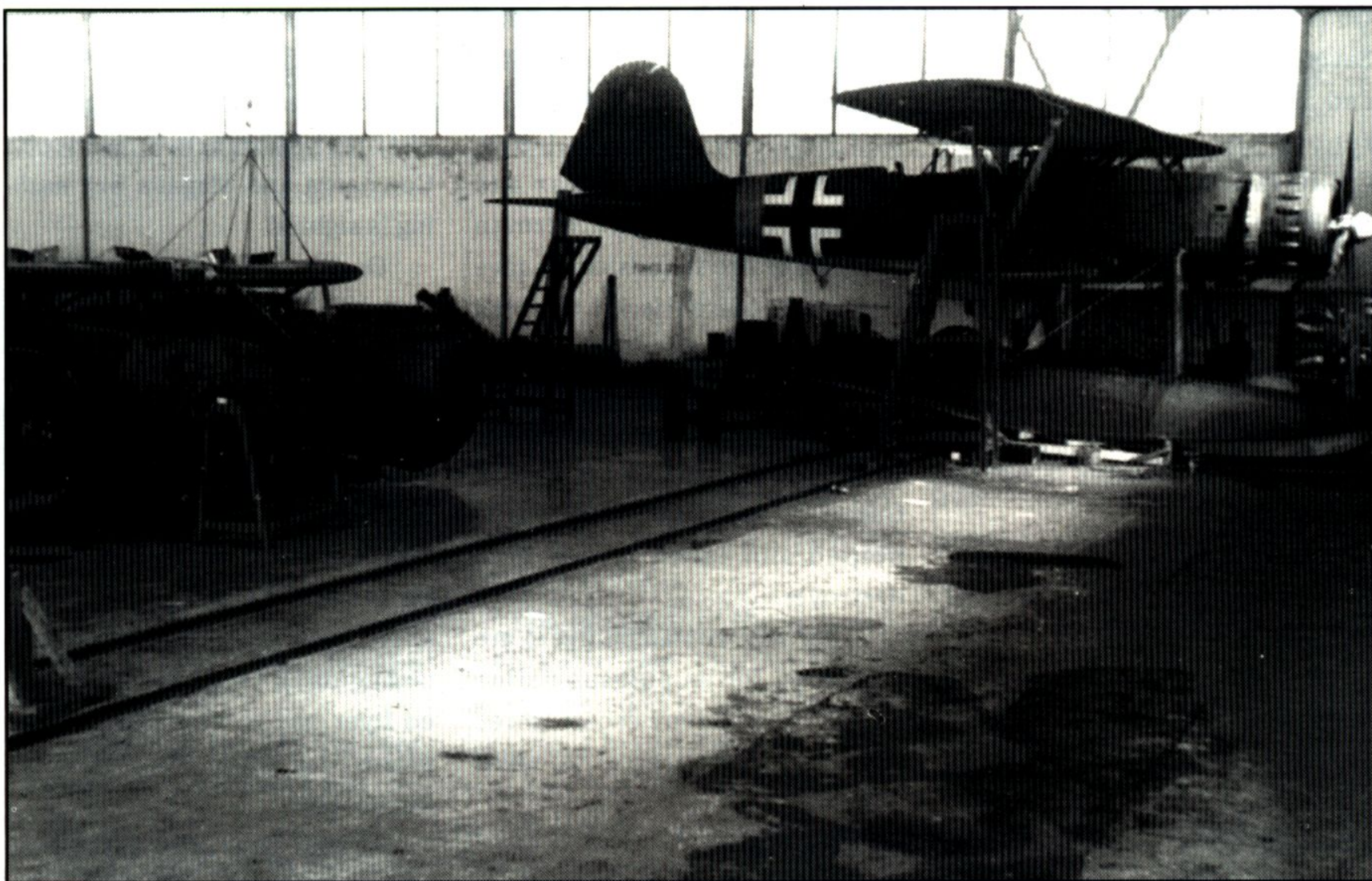
On 6th, two He 59s, the DS+KE and NE+TF, leave Romania to Crimea. Following the german advance, the two floatplanes move to the lake of Ssassyk to operate near the new front line.

Do 24 CM+IG comes back at Constanța with four crewmen of a He 111 of 6./KG 26 (perhaps WNr. 4946, a He 111 H-6 lost the preceding day). One heavily wounded flyer has to be evacuated by plane to the hospitals of Bucharest.

At that time, the three new crews of 8. Seenot are at Mamaia. The three pilots are Uffz. Lutz

On 30th May 42, Alfons REMMELBERGER photographed that He 114. The plane is certainly given to the romanian Airforce to replace its older types (Alfons REMMELBERGER).





In the Siutghiol hangars, the He 114s are overpainted (notice that the swastika has already disappeared)
(Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).

The new planes enter quickly in romanian service, being used for reconnaissance missions
(Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).



GOSEPATH, Lt Werner LANGE and Ogfr. Karl-Heinz SCHWIDROWSKI. All three are new pilots coming to reinforce the rescue unit. We know the career of Werner LANGE. Born at Gera in 1920, he was a member of the Marine H.J. (the Navy Hitler-Jugend) and was always interested in the Navy. So, in April '39, he volunteers for the Fliegerschule (Flying School) of Stettin, wanting to become a Seeflieger (pilot of seaplane). At Heilighafen, he receives his A/B badge after flying on Ju 88 "Stuka" and FW 58 "Weihe". After many schools (Neubrandenburg, Püttnitz, Parow, Copenhagen), he joins the

Seeergänzungsschule of Kiel-Holtenau and ends his training at Friedrichshafen, flying the modern Do 24.

By train, via Vienna and Bucharest, the crewmen come at Mamaia.

As all the new-arrived Germans, LANGE is surprised by the quality of the romanian welcome... One can find everything and there is no rationing. But, if the flyers can eat at their will, they do not have a lot of free-time. All are very busy: they have to fly rescue and recce missions, check the maintenance of their planes, ... So, not a real front line life but nevertheless a very wearing one!

On 9th May, two Seenotfällen (researches) remain without result. But, that day, a romanian Cant crashes on the sea when landing off Constanța. Fl.B. 426 leaves the harbour but the crew (including two heavily wounded) is already saved by Romanians.

Slowly 8. Seenot sends its planes to the East operating mainly from soviet places.

On 10th, a He 59 flights back to Ak-Metschet. It brings two survivors of a crew of 8./KG 55 (the three other flyers drowned). In that mission, the NE+TF is damaged by A.A. batteries. III./KG 55 has operated in USSR from the beginning of Barbarossa. In the

German soldiers in the suburbs of Sevastopol. On 7th June 1942, the Wehrmacht launches a great offensive against the Crimean fortress.

One of the leaflets dropped by the soviet Airforce inviting the german soldiers to surrender "having no chance against the fortress Sevastopol" (Jürgen PUHR-WESTERHEIDE).



Lesen und an die Kameraden weitergeben!

DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN IN DER KRIM

DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN! 7 Monate leidet Ihr schon von den Kämpfen in der Krim. Wiederum schicken Euch Eure Generäle die Sewastopolfestungen zu stürmen. Aber auch Ihr werdet, wie auch Eure Brüder im November und Dezember 1941 und in den Winterkämpfen, Euer Leben lassen.

An den Sewastopolfestungen liessen schon 75.000 deutsche und rumänische Soldaten und Offiziere ihr Leben. Aber in diesem Angriff werden sie sich um das Zweifache und Dreifache vergrössern. Auch für Euch wird Sewastopol zu Eurer Grabstätte werden.

DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN! Ihr werdet von Euren Generälen in's Feuer der Sewastopol-Kanonen und Maschinengewehre, in den Hagel von Minen und Aviationsbomben, und im Feuer der Schwarz-Meermarine geworfen.

Entsagt Euch in den wahren Tod zu gehen — geht nach Hause oder gebt Euch gefangen. Laut Stalins Befehl Nr 55 wird Euch garantiert: das Leben, gute Behandlung und die Heimkehr nach Beendigung des Krieges. Fürchtet Euch nicht gefangen zu geben — Ihr werdet im rückwertigen Kriegsgefangenenlager befördert werden, und werdet am Leben bleiben.

Rettet Euer Leben — entsagt Euch vom Kampf gegen Sewastopol.

winter '41/'42, the Gruppe is in Auffrischung (rest) in french Bretagne (at Nantes). The He 111s come back to the Eastern front to take part at the great assault of VIII. Fliegerkorps (Gen. Frhr. von RICHTOFEN) against the soviet defenses of Crimea. On 7th May, the planes launched the attack. It would be intensive. But, on 10th, the weather is very bad. Nevertheless, the flights has to go on and III./KG 55 will pay a heavy price: five He 111s of III./KG 55 are lost with two others of II./KG 55. Human losses are heavy: 23 crewmen of the IIIrd Gruppe. The two survivors of Lt. Helmut ORTMANNs' He 111 H-6 (WNr. 7176) have much luck to be rescued by a courageous crew of 8. Seenot...

That day (10th), He 59 PP+AO is requested to remain at Ak-Metschet to be used as rescue plane of that harbour.

On 12th, first move of 8. Seenot. A Do 24 brings material to Ak-Metschet when vehicles and heavy material are loaded on the cargo Sulina to be sent to that harbour. At Eupatoria, the little rescue boat Heinrich Tjarks is ready for the future operations.

On 15th May, so are the effectives of the unit:

- Constanța: two He 59s (one in flying state), two Do 24s (unavailable), one FW 58.

- Fernheim (Crimea): one FW 58.

- Ak-Metschet: one Do 24.

- Ssassyk-Lake: two He 59s.

- Taganrog: one He 59 (freed from the ice but not always in flying state). And, naturally, the two boats Fl.B. 301 and 426 (one unavailable) in Constanța harbour.

The shuttles are continuous between all those harbours of the Black Sea; He 59s and Do 24s fly from one point to another depending of the missions of the day.

Almost every day, romanian planes fly usual missions: convoy escort, recce, anti-submarine patrol but there are no special events to be reported.

New german reinforcements come: on 18th, Do 24 CM+IQ (WNr. 51); on 20th, Ar 66 GV+MI.

The new Do 24 is quickly put in use. On 21st, it takes off with its normal crew and medic. The little motorised boat Uta of the Danube flotilla has been attacked. There are dead and wounded sailors. The CM+IQ comes back with four heavily wounded on board.

The following day, He 59 SD+EE can rescue at 3.34 H. a romanian soldier alone in a dinghy.

On 24th May, 8. Seenot will suffer a new loss. One of the new-arrived pilots, Ogfr. Karl-Heinz SCHWIDROWSKI, has a test-flight for He 59 NE+TF which has just been repaired. The plane takes off but, near Constanța, a wing comes off the plane. Certainly some mechanics has forgotten to secure it. Out of control, the float-plane crashes in the sea killing the pilot and his reduced crew:

- mechanic, Prüfmeister Ehrard JÜRGENSEN

- observer, Uffz. Günther BRUHNS.

The bodies will be hardly recovered from the marshy ground and buried at Constanța. That stupid - but tragic - incident

will be reproached to the Staffelkapitän. He will be held responsible for the carelessness of the ground crew. All plane and men are needed for the sea-rescue and such a loss is intolerable for the local german command...

On 29th, the cargo Sulina is torpedoed. Help is urgently needed. So, He 59 SD+EE leaves Ak-Metschet and Do 24 KK+VC takes off from Constanța.

The two seaplanes fly to the bay of Odessa and come back with some wounded.

On 29th, the Staffelkapitän, Oblt BESTEHORN, is called to Varna to remain there as officer at disposition. Its place is temporarily assumed by Lt BAUDIS, the T.O. (technischer Offizier = technical officer) of the unit.

The month of May '42 ends with an unsuccessful research for a lost plane.

June 1942

On 1st of June, He 111 H-6 (WNr. 4381) of 7./KG 26 is hit by soviet fire. The pilot, Oblt FRINGS, tries to come back but has to land his bomber on the Black Sea. A Do 24 of 8. Seenot comes in time to rescue the crew. The pilot and another crewman are slightly wounded.

The following day, the same Dornier (based at Ak-Metschet) takes off again to help a German fighter pilot (perhaps a Bf 109 of 7./JG 77 - a pilot is lost by A.A. near Anapa - or JG 52?). But without result!

On 1st June, the effectives of SBK XII are as follow:

- Constanța: two He 59s (not in flying state), three Do 24s (two in readiness);

- Băneasa (Bucharest): one FW 58 (not in flying state);

- Ak-Metschet: one Do 24 (CM+IQ);

- Sassyk Lake: one He 59 (DS+KE);

- Kertsch 6 (Bagerowo): one FW 58 (cannot take off);

- Taganrog: one He 59 (always not in use);

- Constanța: two rescue vessels.

Following romanian daily order N° 154, on 2nd, lt. cdr. Dumitru NICULESCU is sent to Siutghiol to replace lt. cdr. av. Mihail STRATULAT.

On the 5th, all help is needed to rescue a BV 138 of 3./SAG 125. The plane, 7R+DL (WNr. 0074), sank in one hour. It is the first mention in the war diary of the Seenotzentrale of that unit. In fact, 3./Seeaufklärungsgruppe 125 came - as written before - in the

Ju 87 Stukas on a crimean airfield.

A Bf 109 of II./JG 77 on Crimea. II. and III./JG 77 operated together at the time of the fightings for Sevastopol.

area at the end of 1941. The Gruppenkommandeur (Oberst Georg KOLBE) visited Constanța/Mamaia to prepare the move of his planes (mainly of 3rd Staffel) to Romania. At that time, the Staffel has just exchanged its Ar 95s for the better BV 138s. That floatplane is nicknamed (following its shape) "der fliegender Holzschuh" (=the flying sabot). With a crew of five, the BV 138 is a modern plane which, perhaps, began the first mission of recon-

naissance around February 1942. 3./SAG 125 came in Siutghiol from Varna operating along the planes of 8./Seenot.

The 7R+DL must be the first loss of 3./SAG 125 in the Black Sea. In the four days following 5th June, all is sent to the spot where the seaplane is missing. Two other BV 138s, Do 24 and He 59 of 8. Seenot, a S-Boot of the Kriegsmarine,... On 9th, two survivors are found in a dinghy. The three other crewmen:



- pilot, Uffz. Wilhelm NIESWAND;

- observer, Lt Heinz GEREKE and

- mechanic, Uffz. August SCHICK were killed.

On the 5th, a recce Mangalia-Sf. Gheorghe spots nothing. Two anti-submarines escorts are made on the way Constanța-Sulina and later Sulina-Bugaz. A Cant discovers a soviet submarine and attacks it. The search for a lost He 111 on 8th May gives no result (that day, at least two He 111s of II./KG 26 are lost in an attack on Sevastopol).

On 14th, a sudden storm breaks on the Black Sea. At Constanța-Pallas, the winds damage the plane (a FW 58) of Major Julius HANSING, the C.O. of the Seenotzentrale. HANSING came back from a meeting at Saki. Off Pallas Hotel, two german officers of a M.A.A. (Marineartillerieabteilung = coastal battery of the german navy) are surprised and they are presumed lost with their little sailboat. But the two men will be saved by a romanian tug.



Siutghiol airbase receive new officers recently breveted as observers: cpt. Mihail GRIGORIU, cpt. Cristian RÂMNICEANU, cpt. Mircea ȘTEFANOV, lt. Dan NICOLAEȘ.

On 16th, the planes of the german unit are as follow: four Do 24s in flying state and three He 59s (only one could be used). It seems that He 59 SD+ML blocked so many months at Taganrog is written off. On 18th, a new plane comes. One more time, a Do 24. The CM+IU (WNr. 55) lands at Mamaia. Two days later, it is the time of a He 59 (WNr. 1831) to reinforce 8. Seenot. That float-plane will not remain much time in the area...

On the way Odessa-Constanța, romanian recce seaplanes discover three soviet submarines. They dive as quick as possible after seeing the "intruder".

On 24th, a Do 24 is sent to reconnoiter the wreck of a He 111. In fact, the plane is lost from many months... On 25th, researches are launched to find an italian submarine presumed lost... but the vessel will enter the following day at Constanța.

At the end of that month of May '42, the new Staffelkapitän of 8. Seenot arrives at Siutghiol. Hauptmann Hannibal GUDE is born in Breslau in 1913. In 1932, he volunteered for the German navy wanting to become a Seeflieger. When the national-socialist party took the power in Germany, such a weapon was created and GUDE is trained as pilot

Hptm Hannibal GUDE,
new Staffelkapitän of 8. Seenot
(Hannibal GUDE).

of seaplane. In the beginning of the war, he is in Northern Germany before remaining one year in the Reichsluftministerium (German Air Ministry). He is then sent to Romania and comes by train to his new unit. GUDE is surprised by the lack of men of 8. Seenot. Usually such a unit has many ground personnel and a meteorological section; also a batch of specialist to test the planes. This is not the case for 8. Seenot which only has nine seaplanes... GUDE, who was in the Ministry, never flew with the more modern Do 24. So, he will only fly as observer in that type of aircraft. The new Staffelkapitän has, from the beginning, very good contacts with the romanian officers stationed on the other side of the Siutghiol Lake. In fact, the relationships will be shortened by the imminent move.

On 28th, FW 58 TA+NA (WNr. 2732) is sent to Paderborn (Germany). Another plane will be sent in exchange.

In the evening of 30th June, three new rescue boats arrive in Constanța. Fl. B. 404, 408 and 415 join Fl. B. 426 to form the 12. Seenotflotille under the command of Hptm STRECKER. Fl. B. 301 is no more mentionned and was perhaps written off.

July 1942

On 1st July, a Do 24 starts to give help to the crew of a little ship victim of a seamine 4 km south of the Berisan island (near Otschakow). The sailors could swim to the mainland and the Do 24 will only find a body. That day, the fortress of Sevastopol falls in the hands of the german and

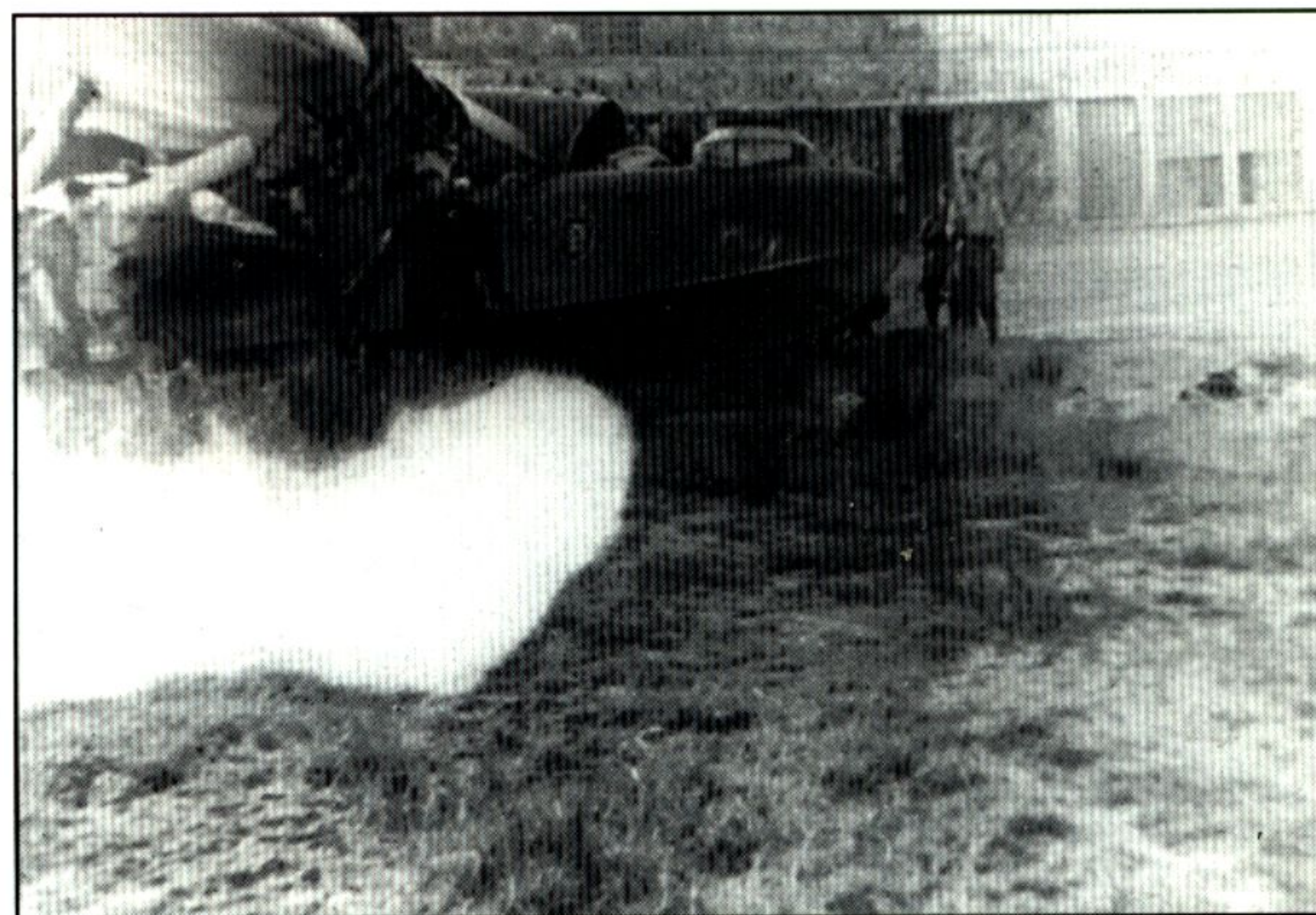
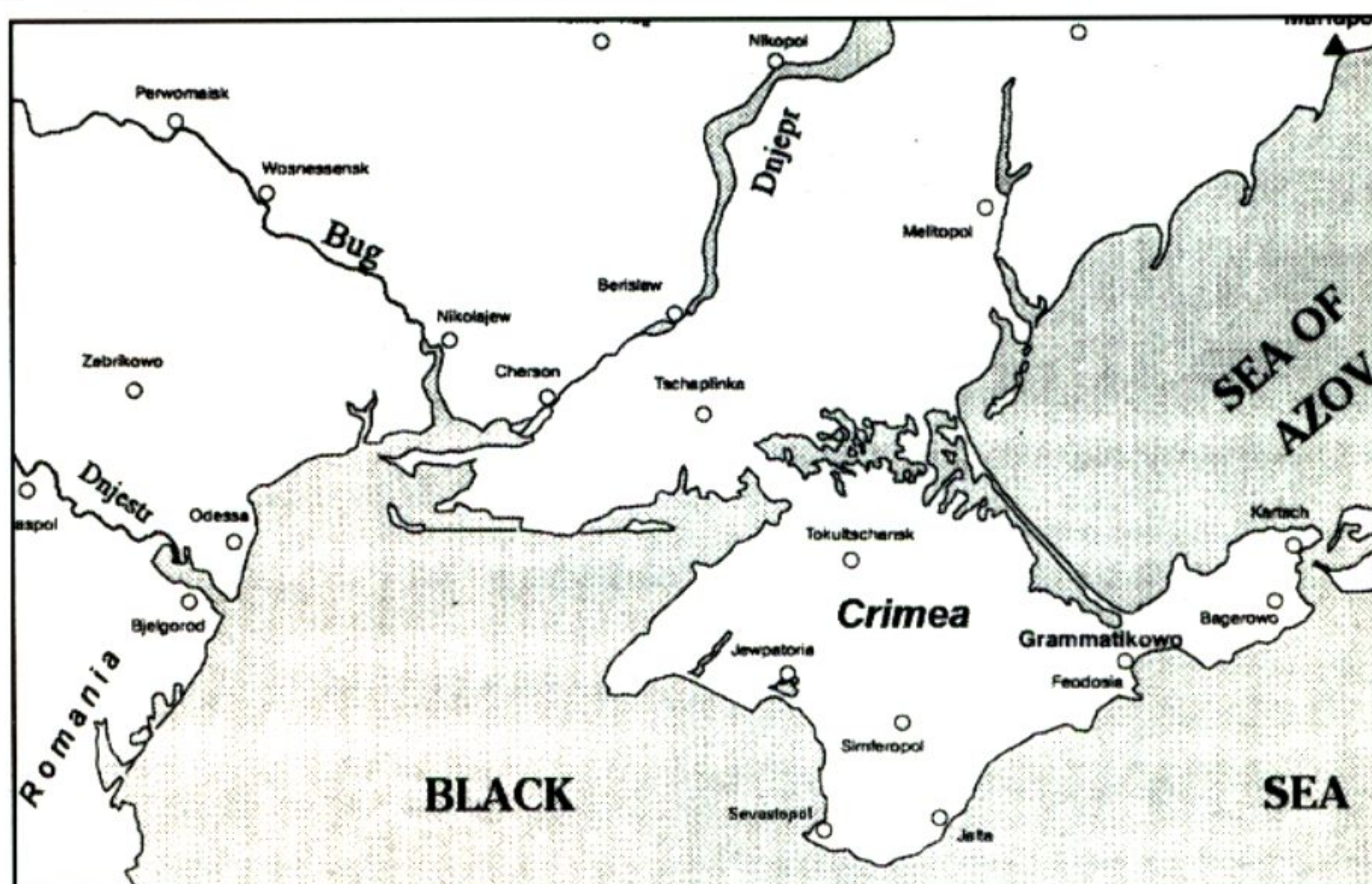
romanian troops. An important event for that area... After that capture, Fliegerführer Süd leaves Romania to establish its H.Q. at Batchtschissarai (Crimea).

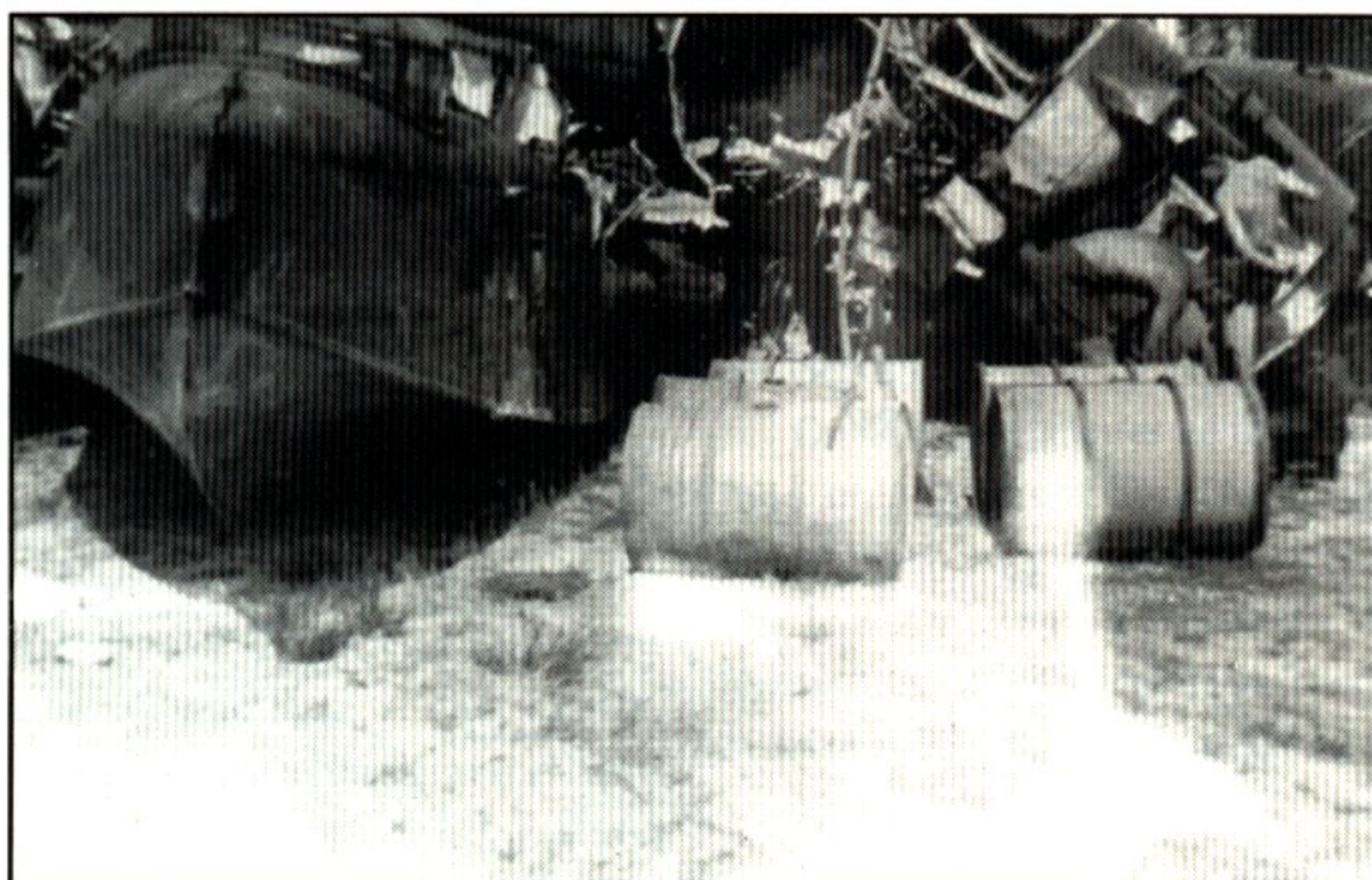
On 2nd, it is told that four men had to parachute. He 59 (WNR. 1831) based at Eupatoria starts with a Do 24. As the enemy operates over the area, a fighter escort is requested. It was possible that the crew of four was of 7./KG 51 (which lost Ju 88 A-4 9K+MR WNR. 3519 shot down by soviet fighters). 8. Seenot cannot rescue those missing men. But the He 59 can nevertheless do its duty. II./JG 77 has moved that day from Oktoberfeld to Bagerowo. The fighters can then operate nearer the front line. That 2nd July, pilots has to escort Stukas to Anapa. Near that town, the soviet A.A. guns damage the Bf 109 F-4 (WNR. 13173) of Uffz. Jozef GRÜBLING of 4./JG 77. The engine is hit and, on the way to the south-west, it becomes certain that the pilot will have to abandon his Messerschmitt. The Staffelkapitän of 4./JG 77, Oblt Joachim DEICKE, remembers:

"A few moments later, the engine of GRÜBLING's plane stopped and all went very quickly. Seeing the great waves, he decided not to spring and tried to make a landing on the sea. With my wingman, I circled over the spot and we saw with horror that the plane hit-

In the night of 9/10 July 1942, Do 24 CM+IG from Ak-Metschet crashes when landing at Siutghiol (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

The floatplane is 60% destroyed (notice the unit insignia) (Family WESEL).





Another view of CM+IG (Family WESEL).



Alfons REMMELBERGER flew as "Sanität" with the normal crew. He is wounded and will remain six weeks in the hospital of Eforia (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

ted the sea in the through of a wave, the pilot remaining in the fighter. Water began to cover the plane when I discovered that GRÜBLING had been freed from the cabin and inflated his dinghy before climbing on it. I asked to my wingman to remain over the spot when I was searching for help. I flew then until the coast seeing the three typical cliffs near Eupatoria. I

could then fly as quickly as possible to Bagerowo. My machine being refuelled, I called the Seenotstaffel asking to send a plane (...). Another Rotte (formation of two planes) had relieved my wingman on the spot. I took off again to escort the seaplane. On the way, we met the Rotte coming back by lack of petrol. We quickly found GRÜBLING which had used

his colour pastille (a great coloured patch was around his dinghy). Oddly, GRÜBLING was the only one of the unit who flew with the complete rescue kit! As I circled over the spot to protect the seaplane, I saw the coming of four planes and I believed that they were Soviets. But, in fact, it was a Messerschmitt Schwarm (formation of four planes). By the way,

Fw. REMMELBERGER will soon recover from his wounds. He is here photographed at Eforia (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

Pilot of CM+IG, Uffz. Lutz GOSEPATH (here, later, as a Feldwebel), will remain too some weeks in hospital. He will fly again but, a time, only on Heinkel 59 (Lutz GOSEPATH).



GRÜBLING had been taken on board of the seaplane and the return was without problem."

So is GRÜBLING saved. Destiny will nevertheless not forget him! On 13th July, the young austrian pilot claims his 7th victory. The following day, Uffz. Jozef GRÜBLING, flying as wingman of the Kommandeur of II./JG 77, is shot down near Jelez and captured by soviet troops...

On 3rd July, SBK XII receives its replacement FW 58 TR+AV (WNR. 3550). That day, a Do 24 starts to help a Savoia which landed East of Serpilor island. Another alert is launched for a Ju 88 coming back on only one engine. But the bomber lands on its base and, in the evening, the Savoia rejoins Mamaia.

On 6th, a FW 58 is sent to Bagerowo (= Kertsch 6) where II. and III./JG 77 are stationed. A rescue plane is needed for such a lot of fighter planes...

On 9th, Do 24 CM+IG (WNR. 41) flies with two engines from Ak-

Metschet to Mamaia. The plane reaches the romanian coast around 22.35 H. In the dark, its pilot, Uffz. Lutz GOSEPATH, tries to avoid a little ship on the the Siutghiol lake and cannot evaluate the distance. The flying boat hits the strand, being 70% destroyed. Six crewmen are wounded; only one man is unhurt. The wounds are not important. But the destruction of such a plane is a court martial-case. Hauptmann GUDE understands that the young pilot is not entirely guilty and GOSEPATH is not arrested. He is only prohibited to fly on Do 24 to pilot only He 59.

On 10th, the important air fightings over the Crimea peninsula forces 8. Seenot to start three times. But the crewmen can only save Oblt PIOTTO of KG 100 (two He 111 H-6 of I./KG 100 collided over the Sea of Azow perhaps after a fighter attack).

On 15th, a wounded having to be operated is taken on board of a Do 24 at Sulina and brought back to Constanța.

On 16th so is the dispersion of the planes of 8. Seenot:

- Constanța: one Do 24;

- Varna: one Do 24 and one He 59. Both are not in flying state and are perhaps repaired in the bulgarian harbour;

- Ak-Metschet: two Do 24s;

- Ssassyk Lake: one He 59;

- two rescue boats at Constanța.

On 18th, the Do 24 of Constanța flies again to Sulina to rescue a wounded soldier after the explosion of a gun tube.

Operations are more quiet until the end of the month.

On 26th July, two Do 24s (CM+IV WNR. 56 and CM+IZ WNR. 60) land at 13.30 H. and 13.32 H. at Mamaia-Siutghiol. The two new floatplanes come from Germany via Belgrade. They come to reinforce 8. Seenot. But, four days later, He 59 DS+KE (which came mid-April) leaves the Black Sea to rejoin 4. Seenot at Nordeney.

On 26 July 1942, arrival of Do 24 CM+IV (WNR 56). The floatplane will remain one year in the Black Sea and do a good job (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).





The romanian seaplane units had some trainers.

Planes used by SBK XII from April 1942 to end of July 1942

He 59:

SD+EE (WNr. 2865).
 DS+KE (WNr. 1981). Came on 17th April. Left on 30th July to Nordeney (4. Seenot).
 NE+TF (WNr. 1841). Destroyed on 24th May.
 SD+ML (WNr. ?). Written off at Taganrog around June/July.
 PP+AO (WNr. 2794). Given for the local rescue of Ak-Metschet (around 10th May).
 ? (WNr. 1831). Came on 18th June.

Do 24:

KK+VC (WNr. 24).
 CM+IC (WNr. 37). Came on 6th April.
 CM+IG (WNr. 41). Came on 7th April. Destroyed on 9th July.
 CM+IQ (WNr. 51). Came on 18th May.
 CM+IU (WNr. 55). First mentioned around 25th June.
 CM+IV (WNr. 56). Came on 26th July.
 CM+IZ (WNr. 60). Came on 26th July.

FW 58:

TA+NA (WNr. 2732). Left on 28th June to Paderborn.
 BB+SD (WNr. 58324).
 TR+AV (WNr. 3550). Came on 3rd July.
 W 34: CA+VM (WNr. 2867).

At the end of July '42, 12. Seenotzentrale has two He 59s, six Do 24s, two FW 58s and one W 34.

CHAPTER IV: FROM AUGUST '42 TO JANUARY '43

That period sees the great move of 8. Seenot. The greater part of the unit leaves Romania to go to the other side of the Black Sea.

August 1942

The first day of the month, Seenotbereichskommando XII goes to Eupatoria. It takes the place of Seenotkommando 18 (SK 18) which itself moves to Feodosia. 8. Seenot follows its high command leaving a few planes in Siutghiol (SK 19). The Do 24 fly to the new base and the remaining planes are mainly He 59s. Uffz. GOSEPATH, who is authorised only to fly on He 59, cannot go across the Black Sea but... it is perhaps better to remain in Romania with plenty of food and pleasant quarter. Indeed, the life in Crimea will be more severe!

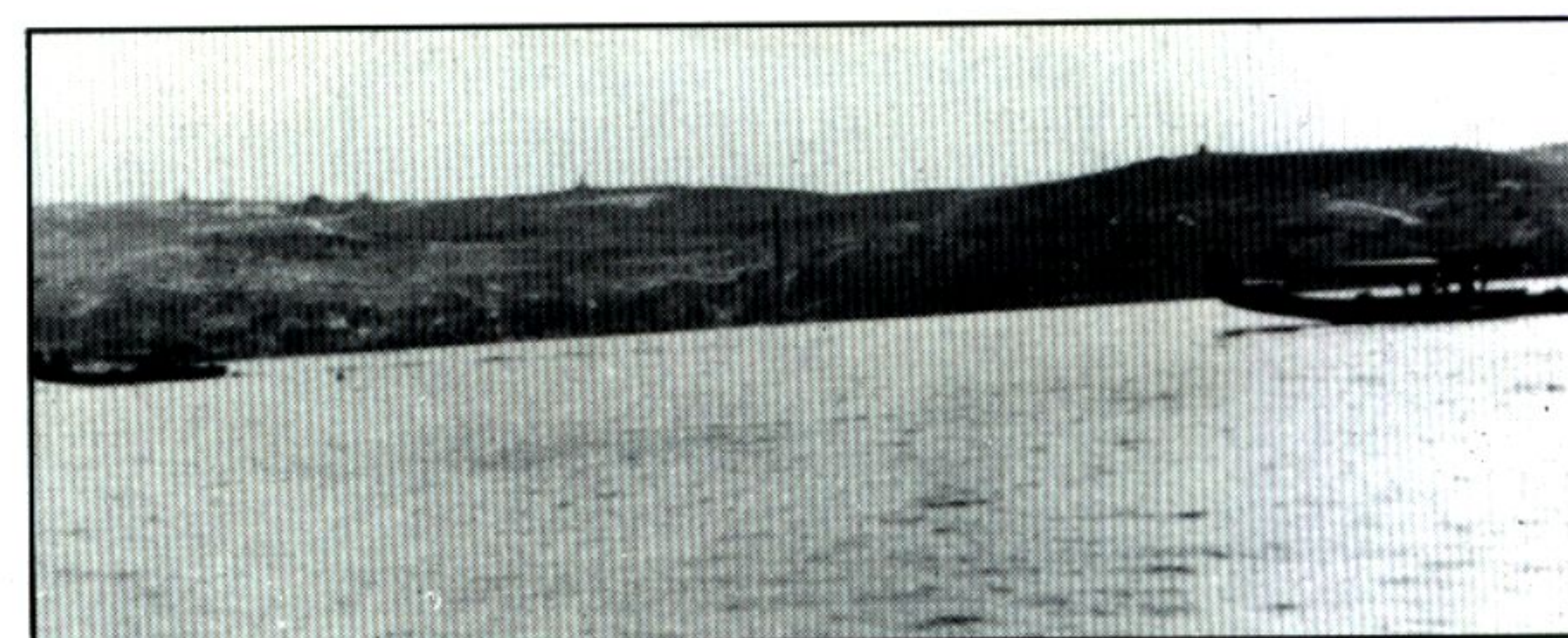
On 3rd, 8. Seenot is called to save the crew of He 111 1H+MM (WNR. 4816) of 4./KG 26. The bomber is shot down by A.A. guns. But in vain... Lt Hans Georg BACHEM and his three comrades are reported missing... The same

He 59 TH+HM (WNR 1524) arrives at Constanța on 13 August 1942 and is seen here at its base of Siutghiol (Seenotkommando 19). It is one of the last two floatplanes of that type sent to the Black Sea (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).

When SK 19 remains in Romania, the rest of 8. Seenot moves to Sevastopol. In the background, the heights with the buildings occupied by the rescue unit (Heinz BLIEFERT).

On the heights of Sevastopol, 8. Seenot could occupy two ex-red army schools. The quarters are primitive (Hannibal GUDE).

Two Do 24s in Sevastopol harbour (Hannibal GUDE).





In August 42, when 8. Seenot is transferred on the other side of the Black Sea, the BV 138s of 3./SAG 125 operate mainly from Siutghiol. Notice the insignia of 3./SAG 125 on the "Flying sabot" but too the insignia of 8. Seenot on the nearby "C Boot" (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).

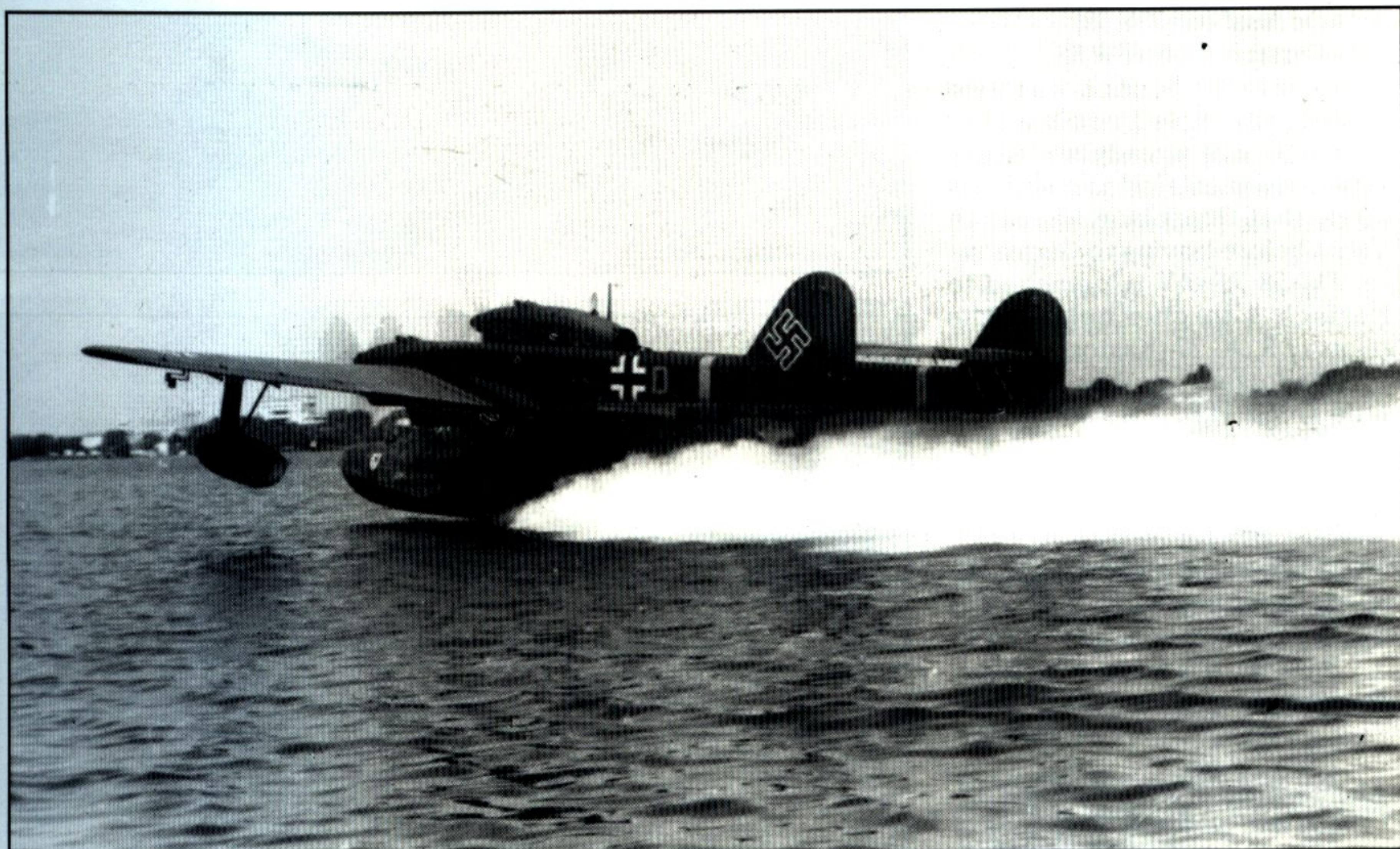
German and romanian planes part the same installations. Here a BV 138 faces a Savoia 62 (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).





The He 114s are always in Siutghiol in August 42. A tarpaulin protects the cockpit from the heat (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).

Start of a BV 138 of 3./SAG 125 for a reconnaissance mission (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).



day, Feodosia and its harbour are the targets of soviet bombers. Do 24 CM+IQ moored in the bay is damaged by eight bomb splitters. The area is part of the front line and has to suffer many attacks. The flying boat has to be repaired and go to Constanța, the rear base only able to assume such works. On 5th, the crew of CM+IQ is rejoined on the romanian coast by the crewmen of Do 24 CM+IZ. That plane is itself damaged by a splitter when being at Kasantip... The shuttles begin. When called for a sea rescue over the Black Sea, many planes are mid-way between Crimea and Romania. Sometimes, it is easier to land on the other side of the sea, to pass the night there and to come back the following day. Constanța and Siutghiol are then constantly visited by crewmen coming from Crimea. They can eat alongside the crews of the BV 138s of 3./SAG 125 always at Mamaia. Mechanical failures and soviet attacks weaken the strength of SBK XII. On 8th August, so are the planes dispersed:

- Constanța: five Do 24s and one He 59 (The Dorniers are not in state to fly);

- Kasantip: one Do 24;
- Odessa: one FW 58;
- Kertsch 4: one FW 58.

In fact 8. Seenot has two He 59s; but it is possible that WNr 1831 was already on temporary assignment. Indeed, six days later, that floatplane is sent to Varna before leaving to Germany.

FW 58 TR+AV is detached to Kertsch 4 to give help to the pilots of II./JG 77 (Kastornoje).

Seenotzentrale has two new little ships: Fl.B. 404 (Constanța), Fl.B. 426 (Feodosia), Fl.B. 415 (Sevastopol) and Fl.B. 408 (Odessa).

Do 24 VH+SD (WNr 64) moored in Sevastopol harbour. That plane comes on 4th September 1942. In

June 43, it will leave the Black Sea to the Mediterranean (Werner LANGE).

Maintenance of a Do 24 in the difficult and primitive conditions of Sevastopol (Hannibal GUDE).

The Red Airforce being very close, 8. Seenot asks always for fighter escort to protect its Do 24s. But fighters are scarce and many times the rescue missions abort by lack of protection.

On 13rd a new He 59 comes from Germany. WNr. 1524 TH+HM lands at Constanța; but, the following day, WNr. 1831 leaves Romania to Bulgaria (and then to Germany).

On 16th, Seenotbereichskommando receives two new rescue boats. On that day, the six vessels are mainly in Crimea: Nr. 404 (Constanța), Nr. 408 (Odessa), Nr. 415 and 426 (Feodosia), Heinrich Tjarks (Sevastopol) and Ferdinand Laisz (Kertsch).

At that period, some BV 138s of SAG 125 are at Sevastopol.

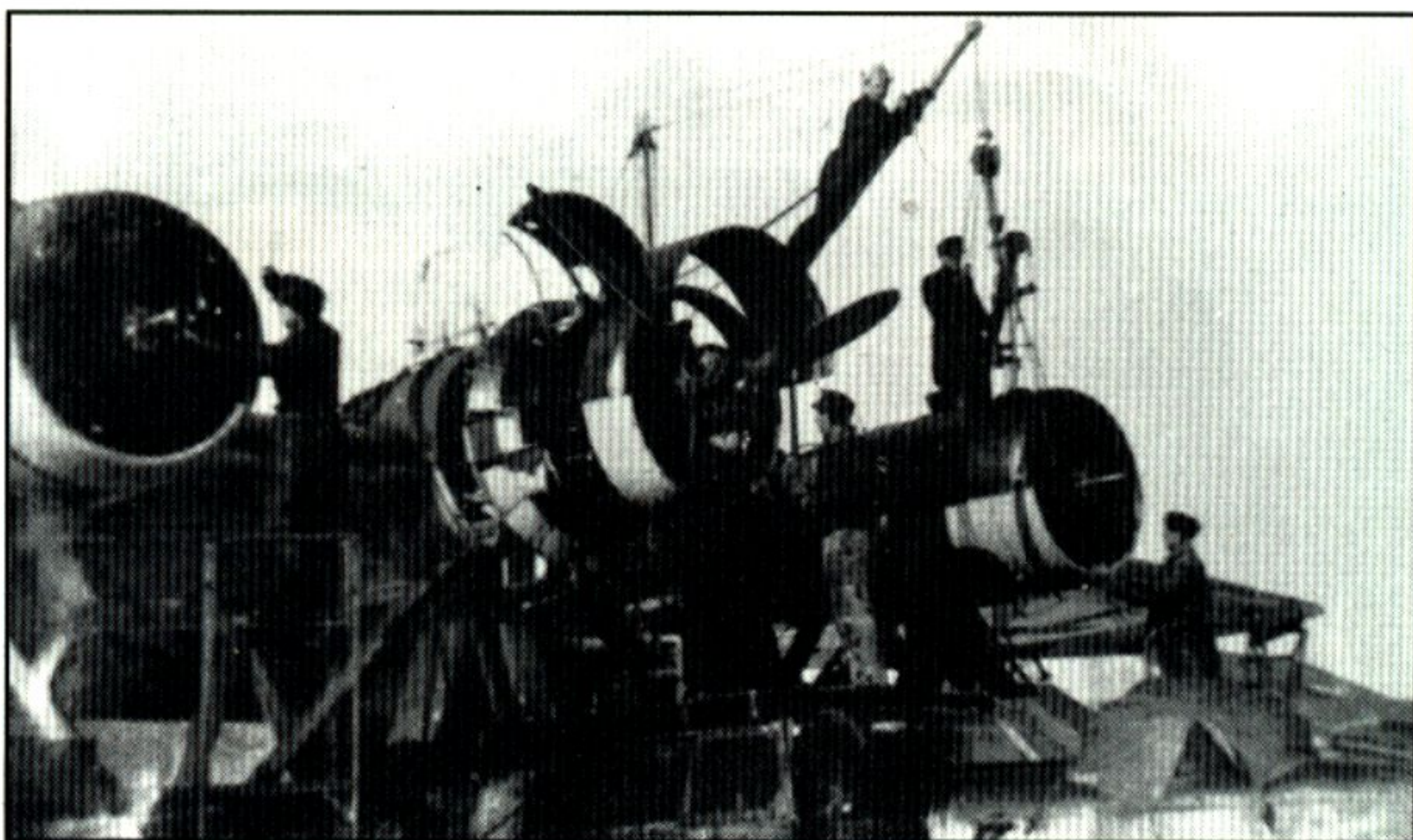
On 19th, an IAR-39 is lost after a motor-failure. The plane falls in

the sea but the crew is quickly rescued by an escorting vessel.

On 20th, 8. Seenot is requested to make a "Seenotsuche" for He 111 6N+FK of 2./KG 100 which started the preceding evening to Suchum but never landed there. The search is made in vain.

On 21th, new operation; that time for a lost romanian Savoia S-55 which has to land on the sea. It is reported very quickly that the crew of seven is safe and that the plane, slightly damaged, is taken in tow by a vessel.

On 22nd, Eupatoria becomes more officially the H.Q. of SBK 12. But Constanța/Mamaia remains the rear base (SK 19). And, three days later, General Konrad ZANDER (Fliegerführer Krim) orders to 8. Seenot to find a new operation base near Novorossiysk. Front line is changing and many shot down planes are too far for the range of 8. Seenot's planes.



On 27th, II./JG 77 leaves Kastornoje. FW 58 TR+AV does not follow and leaves itself Kertsch 4 to join 8. Seenot's detachment at Saki.

On 29th it is mentioned that the little unit of Küstensstaffel Krim can be used to support the Seenot missions. Indeed, 8. Seenot will discover that High Command has not forgotten its first recce missions of 1941. On 30th, the crewmen learn that they could be used for reconnoiter shipping and other targets in south-eastern part of the Black Sea. The Do 24s can start from the lake of Ortasli and are - for that type of operations - under the orders of 3./SAG 125. The Staffelkapitän of 8. Seenot, Hptm Hannibal GUDE, is naturally of a different opinion and protests energetically. By chance, his superior, Major HANSING (C.O. of

Seenotbereichskdo), is a friend of his father (both were in the same unit in 1st WW). But, again, "Befehl ist Befehl" and the men of 8. Seenot will have to fly such dangerous and boring missions.

At the end of the month, He 59 TH+HC (WNr. 1526) arrives at Siutghiol to reinforce SK 19 based there.

September 1942

On 2nd, all the Do 24s have to leave Romania to go to Crimea. The only planes left in Constanța are the He 59s of 8. Seenot (SK 19).

On 4th, FW TR+AV "liberated" by the departure of II./JG 77 is sent back to Kertsch 4 to support 2./JG 52.

That day, Fl.B. 426 can take in tow UJ 4008, a little fisher boat used for anti-submarine operations. The crew of eight german soldiers are safe. The Ferdinand Laisz itself is requested to save

the crew of the Minenleger Nr. 4003 (a little mine-laying vessel). Six men are rescued but the boat has to be abandoned.

The 4th of September sees a reinforcement: coming from Germany, Do 24 VH+SD (WNr. 64) lands at Constanța. Following the orders, the modern plane does not remain in Romania but fly the following day to Sevastopol.

On 5th, a Do 24 is sent to the reconnaissance area of a BV 138 lost the preceding day. 7R+AL (WNr. 0310068) has a crew of five:

- pilot, Uffz. Lothar SCHRECKE;

- observer, Lt Karl-Heinz THOMSEN;

- W/op: Uffz. Albert JANKE;

- observer: Uffz. Reinhard BEIN;

- air gunner: Ogfr. Hubertus GLOGAUER. All are reported as missing.

The same day a FW 58 and Fl.B. 408 leave Odessa to rescue a Bf 109 of 4./JG 53 (based at Ackermann). But the fighter can land on the ground.

On 9th, new departure. Do 24 KK+VC (WNr. 24) leaves Crimea to Nordeney (4. Seenot) and parts from 8. Seenot.

On 12th, a Sturmboot (assault boat) of St.B. Kpie 905 is reported as missing. Do 24 CM+IZ can find it near Cape Dakyl. The crew of three will land and is safe.

The installations near Ortasli See (Lake of Ortasli) are growing becoming the H.Q. of Seenotkommando 18 (SK 18).. Many flying boats are concentrated there and the reconnaissance planes of Red Airforce have spotted the target. On 13th, soviet bombers come to attack the lake. There is no destruction but two unexploded bombs force to close the area for all the planes. On 16th, two new attacks damage a plane of 3./SAG 125.

A Do 24 flies over the Ortasli lake (Werner LANGE).

At Ortasli, the quarters for the men of 8. Seenot are too primitive (Hannibal GUDE).



On 16th, so is the strength of SBK XII:

- Constanța: two He 59s;
- Sevastopol: one Do 24;
- Ortasli-See: four Do 24s;
- Kertsch 4: one FW 58;
- boats: Fl.B. 404 (Constanța), Fl.B. 408 (Odessa), Heinrich Tjarks (Sevastopol), Fl.B. 415 and 426, Ferdinand Laisz (Kertsch).

On 19th, the planes at Constanța start to search for a lost romanian He 114 near Sulina. But the floatplane comes back without problem to the coast. Ju 52 M-S (WNr. 5949) is lost in the Sea of Azow. The plane (having a large magnetic ring under the wings to destroy the seamines) was of Sonderkommando Mausi and the victim of technical problems. A Do 24 starts to rescue the crew but, if the air-gunner, Ogfr HEISS, is killed, the three other flyers are already saved by a fishing boat. In the evening, two men of 8. Seenot, Uffz. EGGERS and Gefr. HAUSER, are killed when an explosive detonates. It seems as the two men manipulated it. Three other members of the unit are wounded.

The attacks of the soviet air-force are more and more aggressive; so, two rescue boats leave Kertsch to Moloski, a more secure place.

On 24th, East of Cape Kasantip, a Ju 88 is seen dropping his bombs. Two men are parachuting and 8. Seenot is quickly called. But the searches are made in vain...

In the evening, an order comes from the staff of Fliegerführer Krim. Two Do 24s have to be all the time in readiness on Ortasli Lake and another one at Sevastopol. If the mist covers the Ortasli Lake, nevertheless a Do 24 must always take off. Proof that the bitterness of the fightings is real and that the german High Command fears severe counter-attacks from the soviet side. Recce planes are the eyes of the army...

On 25th, an attack of soviet bombers kills Uffz. Wilhelm BAUER, an engineer of a Do 24. But the planes are undamaged. However, on 26th, at 5.07 H., Do 24 CM+IG is damaged by bombs at Ortasli.

In the evening, a Do 24 starts to rescue two crewmen of a shot down enemy bomber. The Germans come back without finding the wreck...

October 1942

On the 1st of the month, so is the strength:

- Constanța: two He 59s (one in flying state);
- Sevastopol: two Do 24s;

- Ortasli-See: four Do 24s (one is under repair);

- Odessa 9: one FW 58;
- Kertsch 4: one FW 58.

On 4th, a Do 24 takes off to find a FW 58 lost in sea the preceding day. That plane is reported as being part of Küstenfliegerstaffel Krim. In fact only one FW 58 is lost on the 3rd: WNr. 012 of Fliegerführer Krim. It is then possible that that FW 58 was borrowed by the little coastal unit. The rescue crew will only find two peaked caps and Lt SCHWARZ and his two comrades will be reported as KIA.

That day, the german steamer Salzburg is attacked and torpedoed off Budaki by the soviet submarine M 118. It is itself destroyed by the romanian gunboat Ghiculescu. The romanian Cants escorting the convoy could not prevent that loss and in vain to save survivors try.

On 7th, another mine-sweeping Ju 52 (WNr. 3287 of Sonder Kdo Mausi) is lost near Kertsch. The "Mausi" flew too low and the exploding mine destroyed the trimotor. Uffz. ENGEL, the pilot, and his three comrades were killed and the rescue planes sent to the spot can do nothing...

On 9th, a romanian He 114 has to land on the Black Sea by lack of fuel. The incident occurs certainly off the romanian coast and He 59 TH+HM (manned by Uffz. GOSEPATH) is sent to its help.

On 10th, researches are launched to find a He 111 of I./KG 100 reported lost in the area of Eupatoria or Odessa. KG 100 gives some planes to improve the rescue mission; but, in the evening of 11st, the missing bomber is discovered 45 km NE Odessa, its crew being unhurt.

On 13rd, four IAR-39s of Escadrila 20 land at Eupatoria under the command of Major SANDU. For a good co-operation, it will be useful to have direct contacts between those recce planes and SAG 125.



Summer 42 in Sevastopol harbour (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

On 21th, He 59 WNr. 1524 tries to rescue the pilot of a IAR-80 lost near the romanian coast. In vain.

Three days later, one Do 24 and three BV 138s take off from the other side of the Black Sea to find He 111 H-6 (WNr. 4314) of Fliegerführer Krim. On 26th, the operations are closed and the four-men crew of Fw. Erich DOMEIER is reported as missing. The observer in that particular plane was a member of 3./SAG 125, Lt. Friedrich DENK.

On 27th, Do 24 CM+IZ starts to find a Ju 88 which landed on the sea. On the way, the flying boat is attacked by a soviet fighter but can come back undamaged. More luck on 29th when Do 24 VH+SD rescues four crewmen of a Ju 88 of 4./F/122.

November 1942

On 2nd, all units receive the order to pass from summer time to winter time. Bad weather is very near and it is asked if the two He 59s always at Constanța can be stored in romanian hangars. The answer is positive.

On 4th, romanian Escadrila 102 Hidro-Informații receives its new C.O. Cpt. av. Dumitru TEODORESCU leaves the unit and his successor is cpt. av. Gheorghe RĂDULESCU.

On 5th, a romanian He 114 lands again on the sea by lack of fuel. A He 59 supplies the float-plane which starts to come back at Siutghiol. On 6th, as in the winter 41/42, the departure to Varna is prepared. On 8th, two IAR-39s of Escadrila 20 are requested to strengthen the escort of convoys (on 15th, two of those planes will come from Eupatoria to Odessa).

The researchs are mainly launched for lost vessels. On 10th, a little ship is taken in tow before 8. Seenot can find it. On 15th, bad weather forces a Do 24 to come back to its base without spotting a Pionnier-Sturmboot missing with two soldiers.

The number of serviceable Do 24s decreases. On 16th, three Do 24s are at Sevastopol but no one can take off...

December 1942

On 1st of the month, two events occur on both sides of the Black Sea. In Crimea, alert is launched when an important soviet naval convoy is spotted. An enemy invasion? Off romanian coast, He 59 TH+HM is damaged when hitting rocks near Șerpilor island. The plane, which brought drugs to three wounded soldiers of the romanian garrison, must be repaired. That day, so is the dispersion:

- Constanța: two He 59s (one unserviceable);
- Sevastopol: four Do 24s (all not in state to fly);
- Ortaşli See: two Do 24s;
- Odessa 9: one FW 58 (unserviceable);
- Kertsch 4: one FW 58.

The boats are at Constanța (Fl.B. 404), Odessa (Fl.B. 408), Nikolajew (Fl.B. 415 and 426, both under repairs), Sevastopol (Heinrich Tjarks) and Kerstsch (Ferdinand Laisz).

On 2nd, two Ju 88s of III./KG 51 are flying over the Black Sea from Bagerowo to Sarabus. In the weather, both part. 9K+IL lands at Saki but nothing is heard from the other of the pair. The alert is launched but one quickly learns that 9K+KH landed near Frunsewka.

On 5th, the area Mamaia/Constanța is frozen and a He 59 leaves to Varna.

On 6th, research of Do 24 CM+IU for a lost MFP (a transport barge). In fact, the vessel is spotted on the way to Kertsch.

Until the end of the year 1942, the rescue planes fly constantly but bad weather forces to reduce the operations to one or two for each day. Usually, the landings



The crew of He 114 No 1 embarks for a mission.

are impossible (storm or heavy rain) and the planes, are diverted to more quiet places.

In that period, a romanian He 114 is sunk in a storm while manoeuvring to be towed. The crew is rescued.

January 1943

The mechanics can make miracles. Despite bad weather and the difficulties of repairing the damaged planes, many floatplanes and flying boats can do their duties.

On 3rd, He 59 TH+HC starts from Constanța to search for a missing boat. A little later, the floatplane has to land off the romanian coast. A Do 24 comes from Crimea but the Heinkel can start again... before landing brutally in a bay North of Sulina. WNr. 1526 is 50% damaged. The

floaters must be repaired and the plane has to be towed. Fl.B. 408 comes from Odessa to bring the He 59 back to Constanța.

On 5th cpt. av. Gheorghe BORCESCU becomes C.O. of the Operations Bureau, replacing cpt. av. Sava GRUIA.

On 9th, He 59 TH+HC leaves Romania to Varna, the Siutghiol lake being frozen.

On 10th, a Do 24 searches in vain a MFK (=Marine Fisch Kutter= a fishing boat used for military purposes) off Crimea. The vessel certainly sunk...

On 14th, Do 24 CM+IU spots a little vessel, prisoner of a storm. The crew drops with success supplies and blankets for the eleven german soldiers of the crew. The same day, the waters of Ortasli See begin to freeze. Do 24 CM+IQ

flies then to Sevastopol... before coming back, weather being worse at Sevastopol!

In the night, temperature falls to -12° Celsius and the winds are devastating.

On 20th, Fl.B. 408 leaves Odessa to go to Constanța, avoiding to become prisoner of the ice.

That evening, Do 24 CM+IZ starts for a night reconnaissance. It comes back to Sevastopol but in the dark (the plane lands at 2.22 H. in the morning of 21st) its pilot, Lt. Willy TÖLLE, can not see an obstacle: one of the concrete blocks placed at the entrance of the harbour to protect the area from the attacks of soviet MTBs. The side of the Do 24 is ripped but no one of the crew (including the St.K., Major GUDE, who flew as observer) is hurt. The flying boat is 50% damaged. In two days of intensive work, Uffz. PREUSSER, the chief mechanic, will repair the plane.

On 21st, Do 24 CM+IU which flew in a reconnaissance mission is attacked by a soviet fighter. It can escape without damage; but it proves that that type of mission in area full of enemy planes are really dangerous for the flying boats with no special armament...

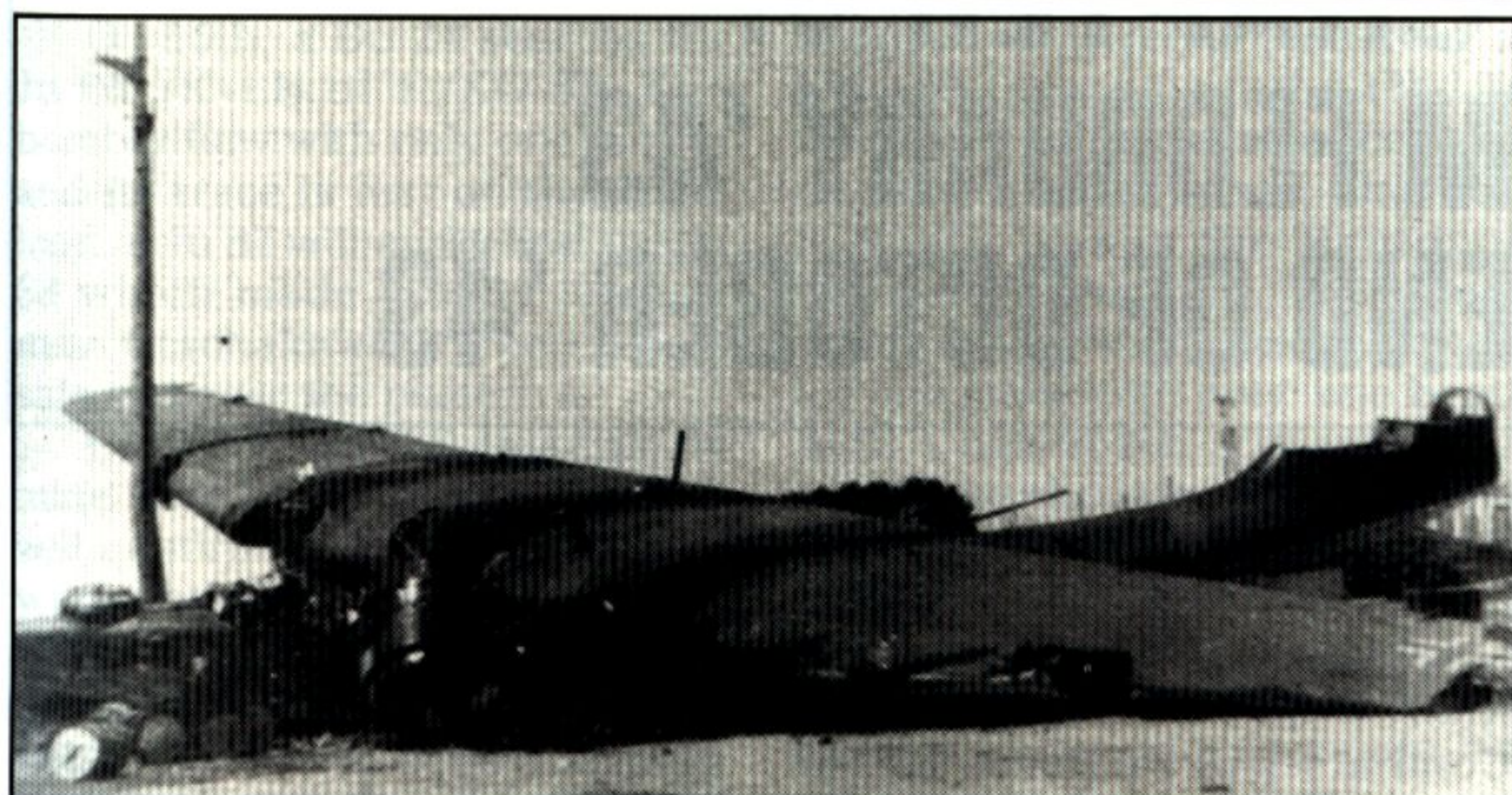
In the evening, new alert. In Tuapse, soviet transport boats are loaded. Sign of a near invasion? All the german troops in the area are called to be ready to repulse an attack or a dropping of paratroopers.

On 22nd, the waters of Varna begin to freeze.

On 28th, BV 138 7R+HL of 3./SAG 125 is nearly lost in bad weather. Radio contact is interrupted but the flying boat can land in the Karadscha Bay. Fl.B. 404 is sent to the spot and can find the plane already blocked in



Sailors of the romanian destroyer Regina Maria look at one escorting BV 138 of 3./SAG 125. In that period (around December 42/January 43), the Blohm & Voss are mainly devoted to the protection of the convoys and the anti-submarine fights (Romanian academy, Bucharest).



In the night of 20/21 Jan 43, Do 24 CM+IZ (WNr 60) manned by Lt Willi TÖLLE hits concrete blocks in Sevastopol harbour. The plane is 50% damaged but will be quickly repaired (Hannibal GUDE).

The crew of CM+IZ is unhurt. Four men pose before their quarters: from l. to r.: ?, Staffelkapitän Major Hannibal GUDE, Lt Willi TÖLLE (?) and Ofw Heinrich BAUMANN (Hannibal GUDE).

the ice. The crewmen of the boat can free the Blohm & Voss and rescue the flyers.

The following day, the soviet land forces attack. The german troops in Stalingrad are nearly capitulating. STALIN and his H.Q. decided to launch a great offensive in Ukraine pushing the

Wehrmacht into Crimea. That new situation will affect the life of 8. Seenot. At that period, Fl. Führer Süd is disbanded to become Seefliegerführer Schwarzes Meer.

On 30th, six fighters PZL 11s of Escadrila 43 leave Kertsch to land at Eupatoria. For the moment, the missions are usual.

On 31st, 8. Seenot is sent to find a glider reported lost after the breaking of its towing cable. The He 111 flew in the mist and no one knew what happened to the glider. Go 242 (WNr. 0549) of I./LLG2 is found the same day on the ice 100% destroyed, but its crew being unhurt.

PLANES USED BY SBK XII FROM AUGUST 1942 TO END OF JANUARY 1943

He 59:

SD+EE (WNr. 2865). Seems to disappear around October
 ? (WNr. 1831). Left to Germany on 14th August
 TH+HM (WNr. 1524). Came on 13th August
 TH+HC (WNr. 1526). Arrived end of of August

DO 24:

KK+VC (WNr. 24) Left to Nordeney (4. Seenot) on 9th September
 CM+IC (WNr 37)
 CM+IQ (WNr. 51)
 CM+IU (WNr. 55)
 CM+IV (WNr. 56)
 CM+IZ (WNr. 60)
 VH+SD (WNr. 64). Came on 3rd September

FW 58:

BB+SD (WNr. 58324)
 TR+AV (WNr. 3550)

W 34:

CA+VM (WNr. 2867)

In the first month of 1943, 12. Seenotzentrale has two He 59s (based in Romania/Bulgaria), six Do 24s (parted between Odessa and Crimea), two FW 58s and one W 34.

CHAPTER V: FROM FEBRUARY '43 TO THE END OF OCTOBER '43

The year 1943 is the turning point of 2nd WW. That period of 1943 will be of great importance for 8. Seenot and Seenotbe-reischskommando XII. On 2nd February, Marschall PAULUS's 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad liberating soviet troops for new assaults. On 5th, the Germans

lose Isjum; on 7th, Kursk; on 14th Rostow and on 16th Karkow. Combats will be fierce on the Eastern Front until 1st September '43 when soviet troops launch their attack against the Kuban bridgehead. The SBK XII will have to move one more time and to evacuate its advanced positions.



February '43

After the fall of Stalingrad, the german troops are on the defensive. On 6th, order comes that all the airforce units in Crimea (the transport units excepted) are under the command of Luftwaffenstab Krim. 8.Seenot is included.

On 13th, the Lw. Stab Krim informs the units that:

- the Red Airforce is growing in strength. New planes will be required to assure the protection of the convoys.

- a fighter escort is needed for the western coast of Crimea and for the Kriegsmarine convoys in that part of the Black Sea.

- the romanian Escadrila 43 must come very soon in Eupatoria and the quarters must be given by II./JG 52.

The following day, a few planes fly to the new airbase and seven Ju 52s bring there the romanian mechanics coming from Kertsch.

The Kuban bridgehead facing the soviet attacks must be supplied. In haste, the Germans build two new units:

- around eleven Do 24s are sent by various Seenot units to be assembled in a Seetransport-staffel (=sea transport squadron). Homebase will be at Sevastopol.

- the fall of the Stalingrad pocket has "freed" many Ju 52 units. Around twenty of those trimotors are sent to Sevastopol to be converted in floatplanes. All the work will be done in the Werft of 8.Seenot. Hptm Hannibal GUDE is promoted Major and becomes the C.O. of the new Transport-staffel - L.T.F. - (remaining nevertheless St.K. of 8.Seenot).

In front of a Do 24,
Gefr. Gustav "Guschi" BERGER
sounds the water depth
(Alfons REMMELBERGER).

On 15th, a Do 24 searches for Ju 88 9K+LH of 1./KG 51. The bomber flew with only one engine and its trace is lost on the mainland. A Ju 87 will endly find the Ju 88 which made a belly landing near Otschakowski. The crew is safe and near the plane.

On 17th, a MFP is sunk by mine. The Do 24 sent to the spot will confirm that three survivors were saved by nearby vessels. Three bodies are recovered.

The same day, it is reported that Lt Heinz SCHMIDT of 4./JG 52 had to parachute from his Bf 109 G-2 (WNR. 14556). The young pilot is a Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves Holder and his loss is heavy. So the researchs begin, hindered by the very bad weather. On 18th, a dinghy with two soldiers of 7./Res.Gr. 218 (=153. Feldausb. Div.) is spotted and the men rescued. A chance for them! On 20th, supply rations are

dropped to three crewmen of a FW 189 (presumed of 1.(H)10) which had to land on the ice. But, on 22nd, one heard that Lt SCHMIDT lies in the Melitopol Lazarett (=hospital). The brave young officer walked alone on the ice and snow with only one boot. With a half-frozen arm and splinters in the shoulder, he could join the german lines. In 1941, SCHMIDT had already been shot down and he came back after a six-days walk. He will soon recover from his wounds to rejoin his unit.

The supply of the Kuban bridgehead remains the priority for 8.Seenot. Lt Werner LANGE remembers: "Major GUDE, our *Staffelkapitän*, received from *Obstlt HANSING* the order to reconnoitre a lake between the Taman peninsula and the Kuban bridgehead. That lake had to be used for floatplanes of diverse types and

had to be well sited giving the opportunity to unload the planes quickly and without problems. On 21st February '43, I started from Sevastopol on 9.03 H with Do 24 CM+IV (WNR. 56). Major GUDE acted as observer and we landed on 11.20 H on the Witjasewski Limar Lake. That stretch of water had been chosen for its depth and proximity of the bridgehead. It was risky to land on that lake as we did not know with certitude of its depth. It was known that many russian lakes are to flat and, in that case, our Dornier could hurt a rock. After two hours of flight, we were over the Lake and tried some faked landings. Endly we decided to land near the village of Kostagajka because we believed that it was the best place seen from the sky. The landing and the "taxi" on the lake took place without problem and the people were very friendly. They welcomed us and gave Kuban

Lt Heinz SCHMIDT of 4./JG 52. The young officer is shot down for the second time on 17th February 1943. 8. Seenot will search him in vain. SCHMIDT will come back to the german lines after an exhausting escape (Josef CHARITA).

Unloading a cart from a MFP. Those barges, very valuable in the Black Sea, are often the victims of soviet strafings.



wine. After some verifications (of lake depth, of the banks,...), we came back on the same day to Sevastopol. On 28th February, we came again at Witjasevsky to prepare the operations of the float-planes. On 7th March, I took the command of the Aussenkommando Ortasli (= SK 18)."

On 24th, visit at Eupatoria of two romanian officers: general JIENESCU and general ENESCU (Chief of Staff). They come to meet the men of the two romanian Escadrilas: the 43rd (fighter) and the 20th (reconnaissance). On the same day, Do 24 WNr. 87 comes from Athens with an officer of 7.Seenot. Oblt Hans TRETTER has to command the Seetransportstaffel assembling the Do 24 lent by various units.

On 26th, Do 24 CM+IU starts to bring back informations about a Ju 52 found on the ice but without crew. The floatplane lands and its crewmen discover that the central engine has been dismantled and loaded on a sledge. The tracks seem old and all indicates that the trimotor landed there a long time ago...

March '43

On 5th, Obstlt Julius HANSING makes a visit to the Witjasevski Liman Lake and two days later the officer becomes C.O. of the two new transport units. His place is temporarily assumed by Major AIGNER.

That 5th March, FW 58 TR+AV is attacked by an IL-2 and damaged. The soviet planes are more and more aggressive in that area.

On 9th, two Do 24s flying in formation in the mist are surprised by a cliff near Feodosia. One plane can avoid the obstacle but Do 24 Wnr. 89 (DI+ZO) hits the cliff. Five men are killed:

- pilot, Uffz. FRICKE;
- observer, Uffz. RUBIN;
- engineer, Uffz. GLÜCKERT;
- W/Op, Uffz. LEHMAN and
- air gunner, Ogfr. HENSEL.

The second engineer, Ogfr. ULMER, is wounded. The plane and crew were of 6.Seenot and certainly lent to operate in the new Transportstaffel. That day, one thinks to remove two Dornier 24s from 8.Seenot seeing the need of those planes on all fronts.

On 12th, weather is better and He 59 TH+HN comes back at Constanța from Varna.

On 15th, 8.Seenot searches for a glider which crashed when being towed. The following day, a He 111 of the same unit (LLG 1) can save four men but a fifth one remains in the glider. A Do 24 can land nearby and rescue the wounded.

On 19th, the alert is launched for a lost Hs 126. The plane (TL+VK, WNr. 3471) was manned by Hptm Hans SCHWEITZER, Gruppenkommandeur of II./LLG 1. The Henschel crashed in the sea and the pilot is reported MIA as his observer/ air gunner.

The same day, it is reported that a german fighter was shot down by a MBR-2. In fact, the victim was certainly Ofw. Helmut FRIESE of 7./JG 52 whose Bf 109 G-

4 (WNr. 19225, "white 9") is hit by the defensive weapon of a Pe-2. As the alert comes very late, a Do 24 can only start the following day. The crewmen will discover nothing. That 20th March, Lt Wolf-Dieter von COESTER of 4./JG 52 must land on the Black Sea. His Bf 109 G-4 (WNr. 19310, "white 3") suffered mechanical failure. 8.Seenot has no more luck and von COESTER will be reported as "MIA, presumed killed".

In his log-book, Lt. Hans LISY mentions the transfer of BV 222 X4+CH. The giant flying boat leaves Hourtin (french Bretagne) on 4th March 1943 to land at Constanța on 20th March at 10.30 H. On 21st, three test flights are accomplished. LISY then goes to Sevastopol to enter in 1./SAG 125. The X4+CH must take part at the supply operations of the bridgehead. That time, the short passage of that BV 222 is no more mentioned in the war diary of 12. SBK.

On 23th, Do 24 CM+IV has more fortune and spot a Ju 52 of 2./Transportstaffel LTF (See) of Sevastopol. The transport plane did not sink directly and the three crewmen can be saved. A few moments later, the Ju 52 goes to the bottom of the Black Sea. In the rescue operations the Do 24 is damaged and, two days later, will fly to Varna to be repaired. That Ju 52 (See) will be the sole loss of the Seetransportstaffel! From 5th to 25th March 43, the three seaplane units will transports 1910 tons of material into the bridgehead.

That 25th March, Ju 88 D-1 F6+VM (WNr 430535) of 4./F/122 is attacked by soviet fighters. Help is urgently needed. The rescue planes fly two days until the turkish borders but cannot find the missing plane. Gefr Ferdinand KOPP and his three comrades are MIA. Nevertheless a Do 24 spots a dinghy and finds a romanian soldier alive near Utrisch island!

On 29th, the romanian Escadrila 43 comes at Tiraspol to reinforce the rescue/reconnaissance. A Do 24 is called to find the crew of Ju 87 D-3 S7+EL (WNr



Do 24 in Sevastopol harbour
(Werner LANGE).

He 59 TH+HM off the romanian coast (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

1054), of 3./St.G. 3 lost... five days before! Lt Klaus LISOV and his crewman are MIA. At the end of the afternoon, another Do 24 starts to rescue the crewmen of an unknown plane seen crashing in the sea near Kertsch. But the aircraft sunk certainly after the impact.

The same day, members of the Romanian 101st and 102nd Escadrilas are promoted. Among them Gheorghe BORCESCU and Dumitru NICULESCU.

On 30th, a Landungsboot of the Heer (=land army) is sunk by bombs. No survivor will be found.

And the last day of the month of March, He 111 5J+BR of III./KG 4 is lost after taking off from Saki. It landed on the sea very late (20.39 H), to late to send a flying boat.

April '43

Do 24 WNr. 64 is engaged that day (1st April) to find the Heinkel. But without result. On 1st April, VIII.Fl.K. postpones the aerial supply to the Kuban bridgehead and the L.T.F. (See) is disbanded. The Kommandeur of Seenotzentrale XII comes back and the Do 24s are sent back to their original units. That month, the Seefliegerführer Schwarzes Meer is "reinforced" by a "new" unit, the Aufklärungsführer Schwarzes Meer (base is the Stab /SAG 125 established in Constanța).

On 1st April, the planes of SBK XII are at:

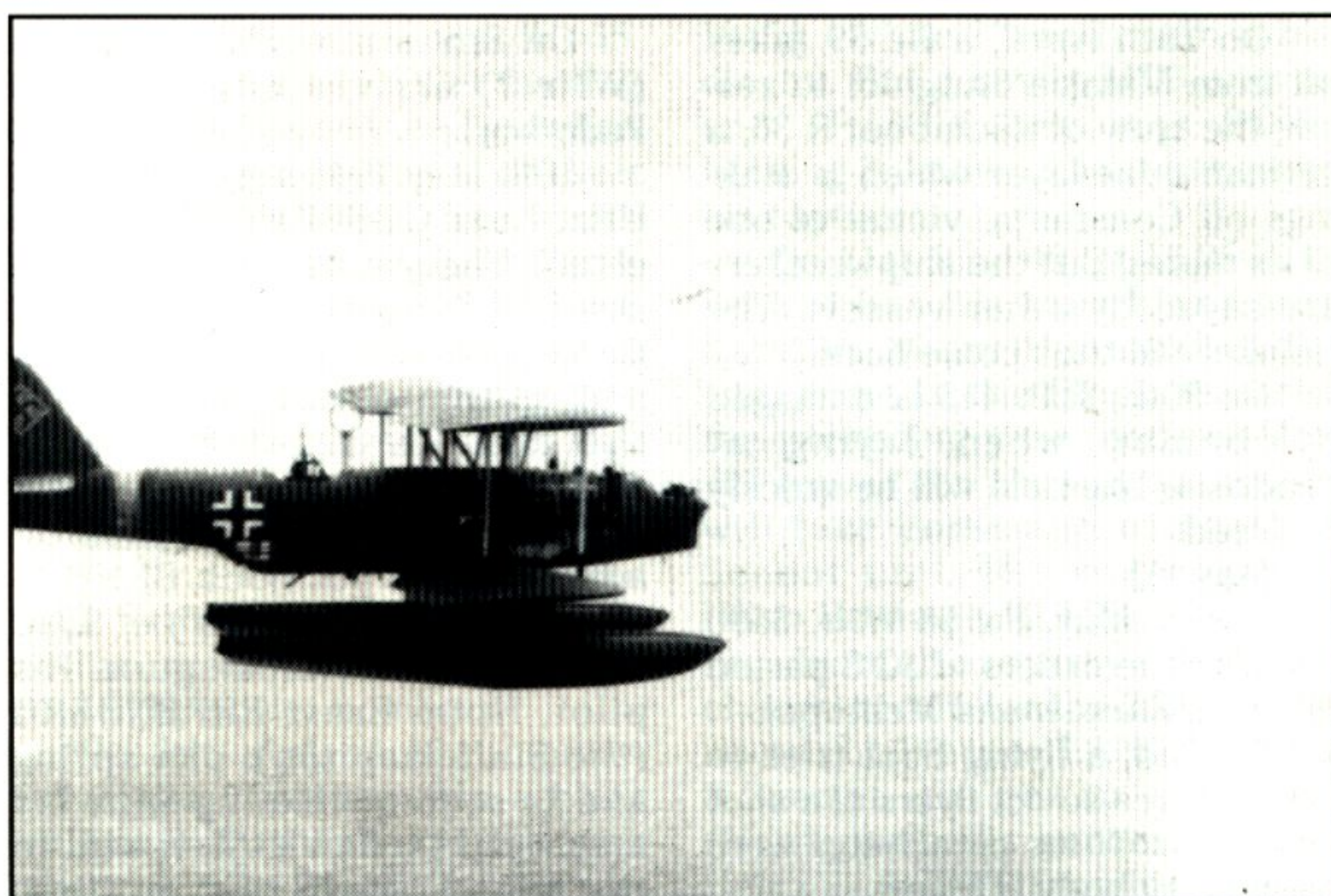
- Varna: one Do 24;
- Constanța: one Do 24 and two He 59;
- Sevastopol: two Do 24s;
- Ortaşli: four Do 24s;
- Anapa: two FW 58.

The boats are at Constanța (Fl.B. 404 and 408), Nikolajew (Fl.B. 415 and 426), Sevastopol (H. Tjarks) and Kertsch (F. Laeiss).

When the Do 24s are dispersed, 8.Seenot seems to receive two new floatplanes (VH+SL, WNr. 72 and DJ+ZG, WNr. 81) as an "exchange" for WNr. 24 (KK+VC) and 60 (CM+IZ) which are temporarily no more mentioned.

On 2nd April, Do 24 CM+IC leaves for a short time to Nordeney for important repairs.

On 8th, Do 24 CM+IU starts to rescue the crew of a Ju 52 of



2./Seetransportstaffel. The plane was victim of an engine fire and had to land on the sea. The men of 8.Seenot believes that the three flyers could escape and come back to the base. After the landing, they will learn that the crew of the Ju 52 dropped two dinghies but drowned before reaching the strand.

In the evening, new reinforcement: FW 58 WNr. 2043 (NG+HG?) comes from Germany. The following day, it flies to Anapa to rejoin the two other Focke Wulfs.

On 13th, researches begin for a lost He 111 of KG 55. As no loss is reported in the list of that unit, it is possible that the crew was saved. Some parachutes had been observed and the flyers must be unhurt.

The following day, Do 24 VH+SL starts to find a lost Ju 88 of KG 51 flying with only one engine. But the bomber can land on firm ground. On 15th, Do 24 CM+IQ is requested to save the crew of He 111 G1+EN of 6./KG 55. The Heinkel is reported lost near the soviet lines and the Do 24 must be escorted by fighters. They do not arrive and, on the way, the flying boat is attacked by ennemy fighters. It comes back with slight damage but cannot find survivors. The five crewmen of Fw. Christian KLOFT are reported as missing.

The same Do 24 must again start a few hours later to land near a little fishing boat. On board, four german soldiers whose vessel was adrifted to Cape Mama. When landing near

the boat, the crewmen of 8.Seenot will only find three soldiers. The fourth one tried to swim to the coast but drowned... The three men of 6./Art.Rgt. 150 are loaded but the Do 24 cannot take off and must reach the coast by floating to Cape Mama. In the evening, Saki is heavily bombed and four german soldiers are killed 8.Seenot suffers no loss.

On 22nd, two planes are lost. He 111 JG+AD of III./KG 27 was manned by Oblt Erich THIEL. The young officer received the Knight's Cross on 23rd July 1941 when the Gruppe was stationned at Ziliştea. With all his crew, THIEL will be reported as missing. 8.Seenot as no more luck with another plane, a Ju 88 of KG 51 which cannot be found... On 23rd, new losses. A He 111 is spotted on the sea, south of Anapa (2 km SW of the Salt Sea and 3 km S.E. of the Utrisch island). Fl.B. 426 casts off from Anapa but, three hours later, being near the crash site, it asks for help being under attack of ennemy fighters. German planes come very quickly and three soviet aircraft are shot down. Nevertheless, the boatcrew will not find survivors of the Heinkel... In the morning, Do 24 VH+SL takes off to rescue a Ju 88 of 4.(F)/122. With no luck. A Ju 52 is reported landing on sea E. of Kalnoje. A flying boat is sent to the spot but, in fact, the trimotor could land on firm ground.

The following days are more quiet.

On 29th April, a He 59 takes off from Mamaia Siutghiol to rescue the crew of Räumboot R 36, a german mine-layer which is sinkings off Constanța, victim of one of its mines! But the shipwreckers are saved by other vessels. The Heinkel can thus come back.

On 30th, Fl.B. 415 is damaged by bombs when laying at Feodosia. The hole will be quickly repaired.

May '43

On 1st May, Fw 58 WNr. 3590 is under the orders of JG 3 parted between Karkow and Melitopol.

On 2nd, a flying boat tries to rescue three soviet flyers of a shot down Pe-2. Three parachutes were seen but nobody is found.

On 3rd, S.E. of Feodosia, a soviet fleet is spotted. A landing is possible and alert is launched. In that period, the soviet Navy is very active and operates against Anapa.

That day, He 59 TH+HM searches in vain for a soviet crew.

The 4th is a busy day. Do 24 VH+SL tries to rescue sailors of a torpedoed cargo. But it finds nothing. He 59 TH+HM is sent to spot He 114 Nr 11 of the romanian Airforce. The He 114 will be reported later as missing with its crew.

And the last plane lost that day is a Ju 52 Mausi (WNr 3370) of 3./Minensuchgruppe 1. The Seenot boat comes too late but the four crewmen (Pilot = Gefr. GASTARD) are saved by russian fishers.

On 8th, a new FW 58 KP+AB (WNr 2) arrives coming from Paderborn.

10th May 1943 sees the end of Uffz. Lutz GOSEPATH's "ostracism". The young pilot is authorized to fly again on Dornier 24. Good pilots are scarce in the area and, in that period, it seems as the last He 59 of 8. Seenot (TH+HM) is rarely use.

That day, after a mission against soviet positions, Bf 109 G-4 (WNr 19504 "Yellow 8") of 9./JG 52 is hit by soviet AA guns. His pilot, Hptm Ernst EHRENBURG (the Staffelkapitän), can spring and is seen swimming with his mae west. Do 24 VH+SL is sent to the spot but will find nothing. EHRENBURG certainly drowned...

That Do 24 VH+SL will have more luck two days later when it comes back with seven shipwreckers on board (three russian civilians and four german soldiers); those men were the crew of a strafed MFP in the Straits of Kertsch.

On 13rd, another Ju 52 Mausi (WNr 3399) of MS1 is lost. The crew of Uffz Kurt CUTOWSKI can board the dinghy two km far from the coast. Do 24 DJ+ZG starts but, that time, the three flyers can reach the strand.

Late in the evening, He 111 H-16 5J+FD (WNr 8210) of III./KG 4 falls in the sea a few minuts after the take-off from Saki airfield. A

boat is sent but, as the C.O. of the Gruppe mentions it, it will be difficult to find survivors, the Heinkel exploding after the crash. Indeed, nobody is saved and the five men of Hptm Ernst KOCH' crew are killed.

The following day, a Do 24 starts to find a soviet submarine presumed sunk by a BV 138. But it must be false... In the afternoon, new research for the crew of a soviet plane claimed by Bordflak (A.A. guns of a boat).

On 16th, SBK XII has the following planes:

- Constanța: one He 59 and one Do 24;
- Sevastopol: two Do 24s;
- Ortasli-See: two Do 24s;
- Anapa: two FW 58s (one in flying state).

The boats are at Constanța (Fl.B. 408), Feodosia (Fl.B. 415), Kertsch (Fl.B. 426 and F. Laisz), Sevastopol (H. Tjarks) and Eupatoria (Fl.B. 404 - but enroute to Nikolajew for repairs).

On 15th, FW 58 (WNr 2043) searches for a Ju 88 of 4.(F)/122 which took off from Sarabus. The twin-engine fell in the sea and one will recovers only parts of planes... and of men...

On 17th, a Klemm 35 of JG 52 (from Anapa) is reported lost in sea. Do 24 VH+SL will find nothing. A few hours later, the same flying boat is requested for a rescue of an unknown plane seen

On 23rd july 1941, the Oblt Erich THIEL received the Knight's Cross when his unit (III./KG 27) was stationed at Ziliștea. Around two years later, the young officer is lost with all his crew over the Black Sea on 22nd April 43. 8. Seenot could not rescue his lost He 111 (Josef CHARITA).

Ju 88s of KG 51 on Crimea.



falling in the sea pouring smoke. No more luck that time...

In the evening, a He 59 and a BV 138 search for a little vessel, a R-Boot, presumed lost. It is found and escorted by the two rescue planes. On 18th, a MFP is strafed by soviet planes and reported sunk. Do 24 VH+SL comes on the spot to discover that the barge is only damaged. On 19th, Gen. Kdo of I.Fliegerkorps asks to the C.O. of 8.Seenot to fly reconnaissance missions when the rescue missions are not the priority.

On 24th May, two fighters crashed in the sea 700 meters from Misschako Cape. The two pilots could escape and are seen floating or swimming. A Do 24 starts with a fighter escort. No one will be found! It seems that the two pilots were of both side. 6./JG 52 fought against soviet Jaks. A Jak is shot down but Oblt Karl RITZENBERGER, Staffelkapitän of the unit, must leave his Bf 109 G-4 (WNR 19706, "Yellow 10"). He will never be found. He took his command nearly six weeks before (on 12nd April). After his death, his 6.Staffel is taken over by Oblt Heinz SCHMIDT. That Ritterkreuzträger had been shot down on 17th February 43 but could rejoin the german lines. He soon recovered from his wounds but the new Staffelkapitän will himself be killed on 5th September '43! The end of that month of May sees many moves of planes and boats. Often the material is slightly damaged but slowly those events shorten the efficacy of 8. Seenot...

On 27th, Fl.B. 426 searches for a lost plane of JG 52. The fighter must land of firm ground. But, on the way, the boat is shot from the land. It must come back.

On 30th, two MFPs are in fire after a soviet air attack. Do 24 CM+IV is called but all the wounded were taken on board of the other vessels. CM+IV has luck and

The Stfw Willy HAHN (of 8. Seenot) poses before a BV 138 of SAG 125. In the background another BV 138 and a Do 24 (Hannibal GUDE).

A german MFP in the Straits of Kertsch. Well loaded, he has a protection of Flak.

rescues five crewmen of 6./KG 55. Their He 111 made a flat landing on the Black Sea and the flyers had the time to go on board of their dinghy. Nevertheless, five weeks later, on 9th July 1943, Lt Hans-Joachim PAPROTKA and his four comrades will meet their fate. In a mission over Bielgorod, the five lucky rescued flyers of 30th May will be reported as missing...

June 43

On 2nd, Do 24 CM+IC comes back with a wounded romanian civilian, member of crew of a boat strafed by soviet bombers.

On 6th, a plane of romanian Escadrila 20 discovers a boat with six sailors on board. It seems disabled. A Do 24 sent for the rescue discovers that the vessel is a ... russian fishing boat. Do 24 VH+SD is called for a more important task. A Bf 109 fell in the sea and the other planes of the Staffel are circling around the crash site. The flying boat comes to late! Uffz. Fritz FRANKE of 4./JG 52 was shot down in aerial fighting. He can leave his Bf 109 G-4 (WNR

19454, "White 9") and climb in his dinghy. But a soviet MTB arrives and FRANKE becomes POW. Nothing is known about him after his capture...

On 11st June 43, at 16.05 H, 8. Seenot has his fourth and last Kapitän. Major Hannibal GUDE who came in the Black Sea area the preceding year (end of May 42) leaves for Norway where he will take command of another Seenot unit. His successor is Hptm Hermann HÜLSMANN, coming from Nordeney. Another change occurs for the 2nd in command. Lt Werner LANGE leaves 8. Seenot to go to 4. Seenot (Nordeney). His successor is Lt Heinz BLIEFERT (coming himself from the same 4. Seenot).

On 12nd, BV 138 7R+ML (WNR 310099) of 3./SAG 125 is missing. Alert is launched and Fl.B. 408 finds it off bulgarian coast. It had to land after mechanical failure. The plane is towed until Varna harbour. The five crewmen of Fw. HABERT are unhurt. It is interesting to notice that the crews of



SAG 125 operated as before (or in the beginning of) IInd WW. Pilot is regularly a NCO, the officer acting as observer (in that case, Lt HARDT). It is rare to find the officer being the pilot. The same day, a Do 24 is called to rescue shipwreckers of a ship sunk by soviet bombs. But the crew was rescued by other vessels.

In the morning of 13rd, Do 24 CM+IV takes off for the early recce of the day. It hits a rock and is 50% damaged. Two men (W/Op, Ofw. Hermann KAPLER, and air gunner, Ogfr. Rudolf GRAF, are wounded). Do 24 CM+IC must then starts to replace the damaged flying boat.

In the evening, it is reported that a night fighter plunged into the sea; two men are seen swimming near the crash site. A boat leaves quickly its harbour but cannot find anything. The following day, Do 24 VH+SL is sent to

the spot. The ex-Uffz. Lutz GOSEPATH remembers that particular rescue mission: *"On 14th June 43, we started from Ortasli at 04.53 H. We discovered a man swimming alone and we landed nearby. The officer in the plane was of national-socialist meaning and, after opening the door, he cried to the man: 'Kamerad, du bist gerettet. Heil Hitler!' (Comrade, you are saved. Heil Hitler!). He was very suprised when he heard his answer: 'Ni pou ni mai' (I do not understand). The man was a soviet flyer! He was taken on board and we pursued the researches. Endly, we found another exhausted swimmer. He was the wireless operator of the lost night fighter. When he embarked, Uffz. PFEFFERS saw the Soviet and, very angry, wanted to punch him. He told that the soviet plane collided voluntarily with his aircraft."* In fact, the soviet pris-

onner was sergent Nicolai SCHINITZEN, air gunner in 27th soviet recce Squadron (63rd Fleet Air Brigade "Eagle"). As his pilot was not rescued, it is possible that he was killed and that the soviet plane then ran into the Bf 110 (of 10./ZG 1, the night fighter Squadron of Zerstörergeschwader 1) flying to close... In the beginning of the war against USSR (June 41), many "Taran-attacks" (i.e. such suicidal actions) were launched by isolated soviet pilots but, in that case, the fact is dubious. PFEFFERS after recovering his calm, can give more informations and, a few minuts later, his pilot, Oblt JANKE, is rescued too. VH+SL then starts to rejoin Ortasli. It lands on the lake at 9.27 H. Sgt Nicolai SCHINITZEN is delivered to the Fliegerkorps which hopes to gain new informations about the ennemy Airforce.



From l. to r.: an engineer from Siemens, Hauptmann Hermann HÜLSMANN (new C.O. of 8. Seenot), Ob. Ing. KLOSS, Lt Heinz BLIEFERT and another civilian engineer from the Luftgau (Heinz BLIEFERT).

Mid-43, it seemed more practical to train the Sanitäter (medical ordelies) as air-gunners. So, the same man could act both functions and reduce the number of crewmen. In June 43, Alfons REMMELBERGER (of SBK XII) followed such a training at Stolp. After around six weeks, he became an air gunner and a member of 8. Seenot (Alfons REMMELBERGER).





A BV 138 of 3./SAG 125 flies over an islet in the Danube Delta (Bundesarchiv KOBLENZ).

On 16th, the only He 59 of 8. Seenot is in Sevastopol and makes a reconnaissance until the Turkish territorial waters. An unknown boat is spotted near the Turkish coast but cannot be identified.

On 17th, Do 24 CM+IC comes to load Masch. Gefr. BECKER, member of 1. Lehrflotille Kertsch. The soldier/sailor was wounded in a Soviet strafing.

On 20th, Do 24 VH+SL can save near Taganrog Uffz. KUTZ, pilot of 9./JG 3. The young man floated with his inflated mae west and his rescue was easy. He is nevertheless wounded and must be treated in Ortasli.

On 22nd, Do 24 CM+IV (WNR 56) is sent for repairs to

Nordeney. The plane will remain in 4. Seenot and will be lost on 23 August 1943 in North Sea.

On 27th, new moves. FW 58 WNR 2043 leaves Eupatoria to Anapa (to be included in JG 52). At 16.35 H, Do 24 VH+SD (WNR 64) leaves Sevastopol to Varna. It is manned by Uffz. Lutz GOSEPATH who leaves the area with his crew. Via Athens, the floatplane joins 6. Seenot at Tarent. The GOSEPATH's crew will operate in the Mediterranean until 7th August 43 when VH+SD crashes in the sea off Sardinia. The six men will be rescued after 153 hours in their dinghy! GOSEPATH and his comrades will fly again and, as we will see it, come back in the Black Sea area...

On 30th, a Romanian He 114 is reported lost and a Do 24 is sent to the spot. In fact, the floatplane could reach the coast with its engine.

July 43

At that period, 1./SAG 125 comes back in the Black Sea. The unit, equipped with the modern Ar 196s, was in Norway. The events in the Crimea area forces High Command to send the Staffel in Sevastopol.

On 1st, Do 24 VH+SL can help a Savoia 62 of 101st Escadrila. The flying boat had to land on the sea and the crew:

- adjutant șef Petre CONSTANTINESCU, pilot;

- locotenent Anton NEDELCEANU, observer;

- maistru II Anton POP, mechanic and

- sergent major Nicolae MINGIUNESCU, air gunner is unhurt.

On 2nd, Do 24 WNR 37 starts to escort a Ju 88 of 4.(F)/122 flying with only one engine. When the bomber crosses the coast, the flying boat comes back. That day, BV 138 7R+ML (WNR 310099) of 3./SAG 125 (already victim of a mechanical failure on 12nd June) is lost. On 3rd, a Do 24 and five BV 138s research the lost plane. For a while, pilot was an officer... and the Staffelführer! But despite the fact that so many planes are engaged, 7R+ML and its crew:

- Oblt Walter LEITERITZ, pilot;

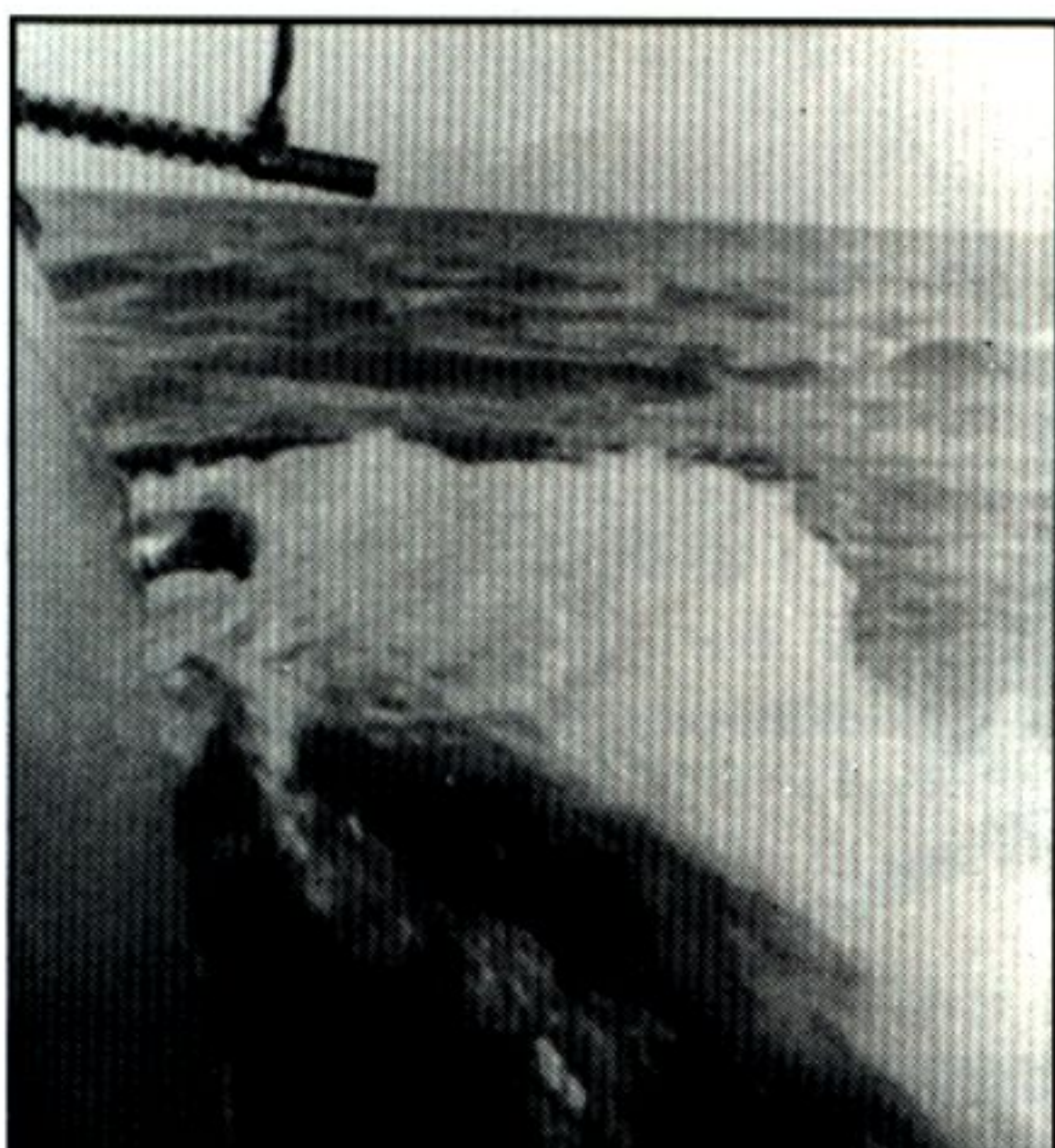
- Lt Heinz MARLIES, observer;

- Uffz. Karl MATEGKA, wireless operator;

- Fw. Arnold LADWIG, mechanic and

- Ogfr. Paul RIESKE, air gunner will be reported as MIA.

That 3rd is another bad day for SAG 125! Ar 196 (WNR 301) of 1./SAG 125 is 100% destroyed at Sevastopol. The floatplane crashed near the harbour but its crew of two is unhurt. BV 138 (WNR 310069) of the same Staffel (equipped partly with that type of plane) is destroyed when hitting a mine (perhaps dropped by a Soviet plane). Its crew:



Start of a Do 24 for a mission (Werner LANGE).

- Gefr. Eduard KALWEIH, pilot;
- Gefr. Otto SCHORN, observer;
- Gefr. Franz BÜCHEL, wireless operator;
- Uffz. Hans CRÄMER, mechanic and

- Ogfr. Max GRUBER, air gunner is wounded.

On 5th, FW 58 BA+BN (WNr 3597) comes from the Paderborn Luftpark.

On 6th, the He 59 of 8. Seenot discovers oil patches on the

water. Perhaps a sunken submarine? (Soviet submarine S 102 is indeed lost on a mine, South of Kertsch, when coming back after a mission).

That day, another BV 138 of 3./125 must land on the sea but a Do 24 can find him and give help.

On 7th, new loss for the ill fated SAG 125. BV 138 7R+CL (WNr 314) of 3rd Staffel is missing with its crew:

- Lt Karl-Heinz LEHMANN, pilot;
- Ofw. Karl NILSON, wireless operator;
- Uffz. Heinz HERRY, mechanic;
- Uffz. Martin LEICHSENING, air gunner and
- the other air gunner, Ogfr. Hermann JETTER.

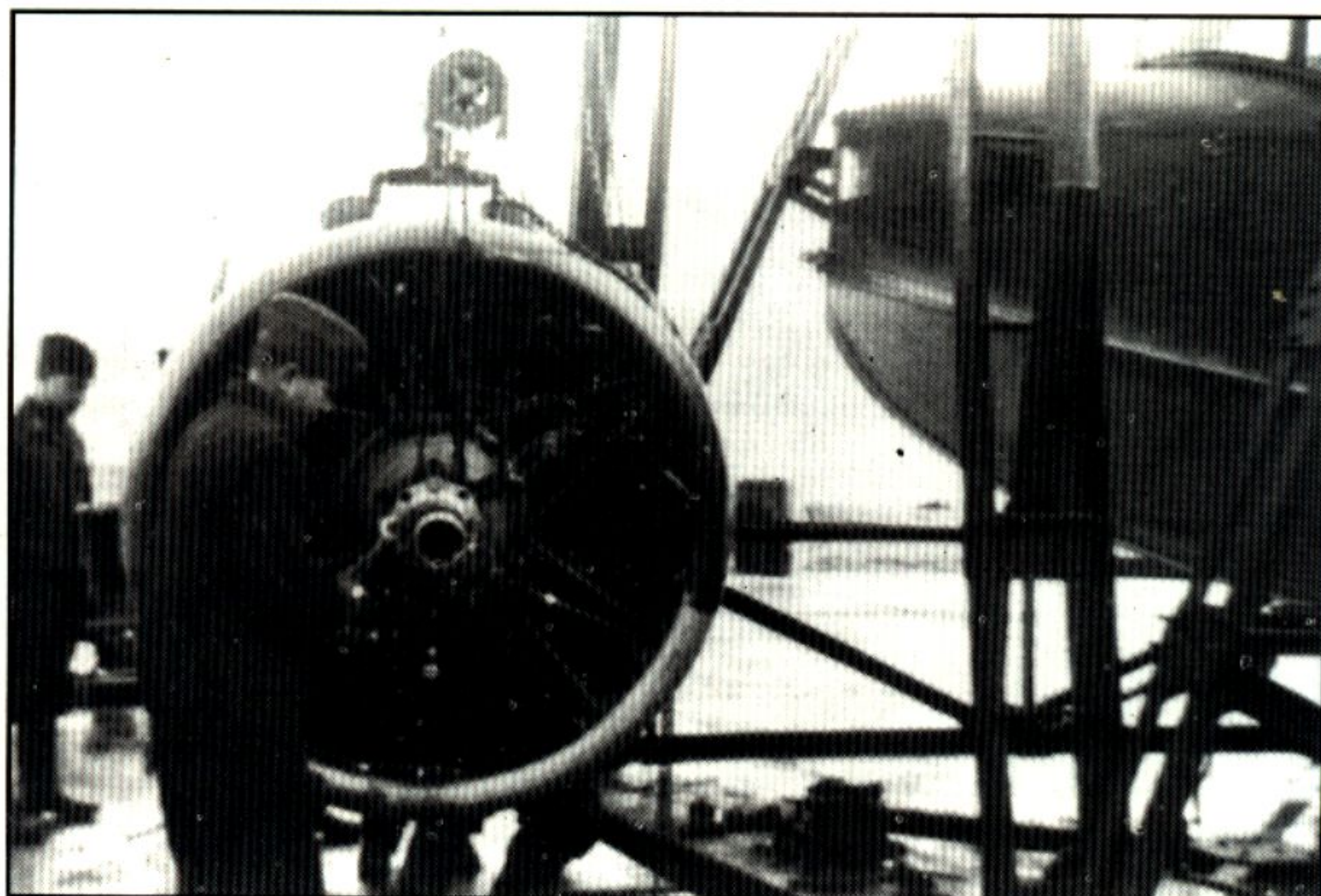
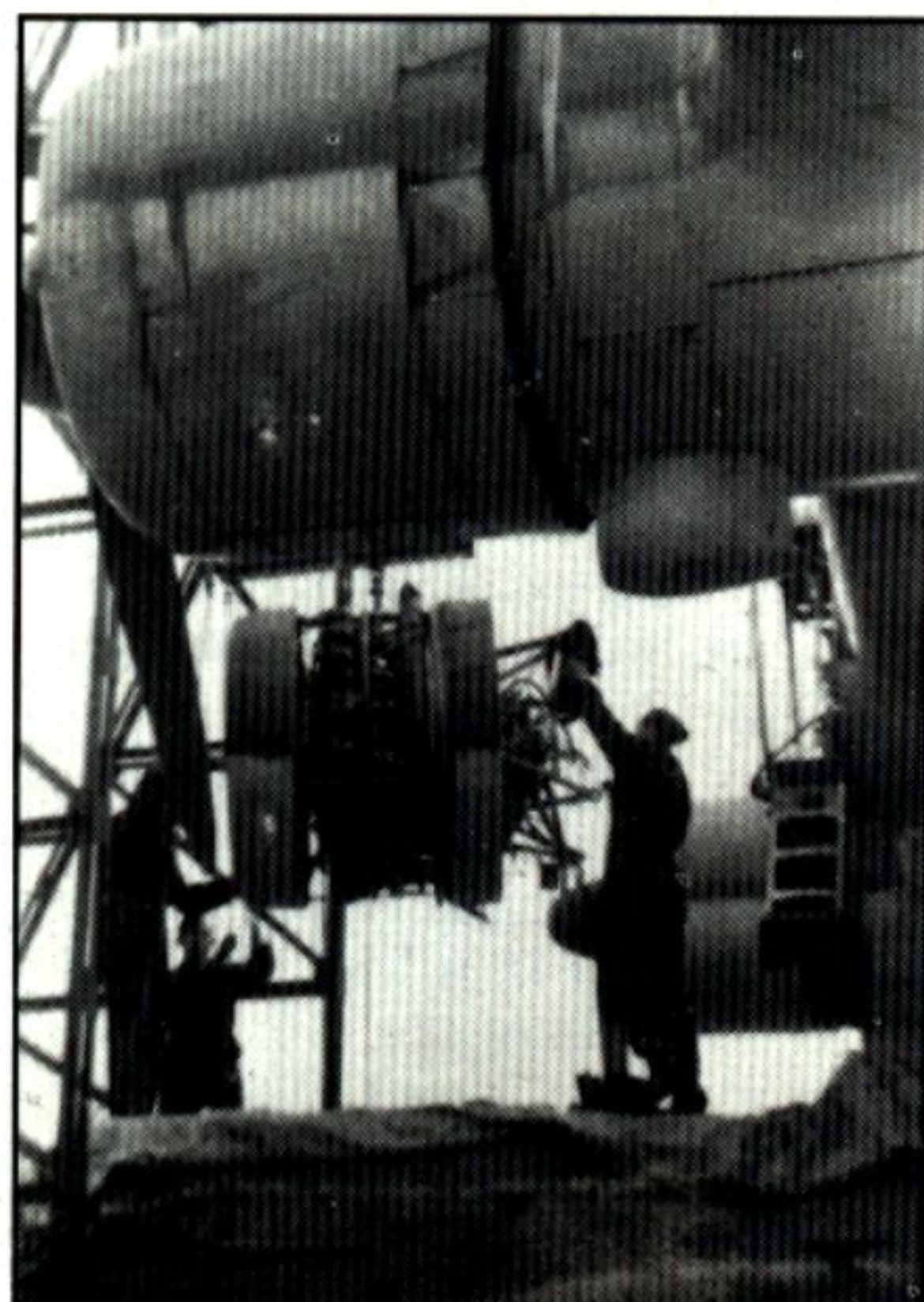
The following day, the planes are sent to the spot. A Do 24 will find a great oil patch and the He 59 will come back with a tank...

On 9th, a Do 24 is called again for another Ju 88 of 4.(F)/122 flying with one engine. The recce plane will later crash on the ground behind german lines.

In the Sevastopol harbour. Left, in the background, the Werft (repair shops) of 8. Seenot (Franz SELINGER).

Maintenance of a Do 24 in Sevastopol (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

Mechanics working on Do 24 engines in the Sevastopol workshops (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



On 11st, Fw. Alfred LEHMANN of 6./JG 52 is shot down by two P-39s Aircobra. His Bf 109 G-6 (WNR 20180, "Yellow 10") falls in the sea. The pilot must be killed and all the rescue sent (a FW 58, a Do 24 and Fl.B. 408) will find nothing.

On 16th, a MFP is attacked by soviet planes near Taryl Cape. Six wounded of 3. and 5. Lehrflotille Kertsch are brought back to Ortasli by a Do 24.

On 21st, a new FW 58 comes in reinforcement: PI+NH.

On 22nd, Ju 88 F6+EM of 4.(F)/122 suffers attacks of soviet fighters. The crew asks for help. A Do 24 starts with an escort of... one He 111 and another Ju88! Proof that the german fighters are scarce for such missions! But Ju 88 F6+EM can land at Sarabus. The attacks lasted twenty minuts: nevertheless, only the wireless operator is wounded.

That day, a new FW 58 comes from Paderborn. WNR 1960 lands at Eupatoria.

On 24th, a Do 24 starts three times to save the crew of a tug sunken by a sea mine. Nothing is found and it is believed that the sailors were already rescued by vessels of the convoy.

Two days later, unsuccesfull research of the He 59 for a possible sunken submarine.

On 29th, a Bf 110 crashes in the sea near Saki. A FW 58 and a Do 24 start but the crew of two was taken on board of a little boat.

August '43

From that month, the war diary of Seenotbereichskommando XII becomes very concise. The men of the unit have no more time to write with precision what happened every day. So, informations become scarce and we must assume that the history is no more complete.

On 1st, Do 24 VH+SL is called to assist an Ar 196 (certainly of 1./SAG 125) which had to land on the Black Sea. The two flyers are taken on board and the Arado is taken in tow by a little boat. The same day, Ar 196 (WNR 73) of the

same 1./125 is lost in Sevastopol area. The crew:

- Ofw. Walter HAGENDORF, pilot and

- Ofw. Walter ALBITZ, W/Op is reported as MIA.

On 2nd, researchs are launched to find a dinghy with a romanian NCO (perhaps a pilot). But Fl.B. 426 sent to the presumed spot will find nothing.

On 7th, Do 24 CM+FL must find a german pilot shot down near Noworossisk. That day, 4./JG 52 loses two planes. One is hit by the plane it just shot down; the other is victim of its engine. No german pilot will be found but the Dornier comes back with a soviet flyer, a presumed victim of that aerial fighting.

On 10th and 13th, a MFP is strafed by soviet planes. Wounded sailors are brought back to Kertsch.

On 14th, a BV 138 signals that a dinghy is floating on the Black Sea. Four men seem alive. Do 24 VH+SL will land in the vicinity and save the four men.

The end of that month is not so succesfull. On 19th, Ju 88 D-1 F6+KM (WNR 430883) of 4.(F)/122 cannot be found with Lt Otto KLIVAN's crew. And, on 26th, a Do 24 with a good fighter escort flies to Tuapse area to save the crew of Ju 88 D-1 T5+DK (WNR 430818) of 2.(F)/100. It will not be found. Lt Kurt BELAND and his three crewmen are missing.

September '43

On 4th, Blenheim Nr 28 of the romanian Airforce is reported missing. In fact, it must land somewhere and the rescue planes are recalled.

On 5th, another MFP is strafed and the wounded are rescued by a Do 24. On 16th, Do 24



At an unknown date, King Mihai of Romania comes in Siutghiol. A german officer explains to his royal visitor the commands of a BV 138.

CM+IQ is searching for a lost Bf 110. Near the crash site S. of Noworossisk, the flying boat is attacked by soviet fighters and the pilot Fw Karl-Heinz SCHULZE, is killed. Very quickly, Oblt GLINKEMANN, the observer, takes over at the controls and can come back to Ortasli with the help of Ofw BAUMANN, the flight engineer.. Another Do 24 is then called and its crew rescues the wounded Uffz Johann HEIMANN, pilot of the Bf 110 (Wnr 5015) of Fl.F. Krim. His two comrades were killed.

On 20th, another MFP (of 30. R-Flo. of Kertsch) is strafed. A sailor is brought back to the mainland. That day, Oberstleutnant Julius HANSING leaves the command of 12. SBK becoming Qu 2 (See) in the services of Luftflotte 4. His successor is one of his officers: Major AIGNER.

At the time so is the dispersion of 12. SBK:

- Kommandeur (Major AIGNER) in Eupatoria

- 12. Seenotflotille (Hptm GUTZEIT) in Constanța

- 8. Seenotstaffel (Hptm HÜLSMANN) in Sevastopol

- see rescue bases: Ortaslisee, Feodosia, Odessa, Sulina, Constanța and Varna.

The following day, FW 189 A-2 (Wnr 2350) of NAGr 9 is lost over the sea in the Straits of Kertsch. Seenot 8 will not find the three

men of Uffz Fritz OHM's crew. Nobody is found. On 23rd, a Bf 110 of 5./NJG 200 is reported missing. The rescue planes have no more luck! But if pilot (Uffz Wilfried EBERARD) is killed, his wounded comrade will be saved by a boat.

On 24th, a Ju 52 Mausi crashes in the Black Sea. Do 24 CM+IC comes very quickly on the crash site but the crewmen could reach the land. On 25th, a soviet plane plunges into the sea. A parachute is seen. Do 24 DJ+ZG arrives too late. The pilot certainly drowned.

On 26th, new mission to recover a wounded sailor of a strafed MFP. On 30th, proof of the aggressivity of the soviet Airforce: Constanța is bombed! A soviet Boston is shot down (perhaps by the Flak) and Fl. B. 426 is sent to the spot. No survivor will be found...

October '43

On 2nd, two MFPs are destroyed when hitting sea mines. Eight wounded and twelve shipwreckers are rescued.

On 6th, new loss of a BV 138 of 1./SAG 125. 7R+HH (Wnr 130110) is searched near Jalta by Do 24 VH+SL. In vain. Plane and crew:

- Lt Harry KREMER, pilot
- Hptm Hans RÖMER, observer;
- Uffz. Jacob BURENS, W/Op;
- Uffz. Gerhardt BISKUP, air gunner and
- Ofw. Helmut SCHWIPPERT are reported MIA.

On 7th, 8. Seenot is called for an important operation. A soviet destroyer force (under Captain 2nd Class NEGODA) is engaged to attack german evacuation transports off Crimean coast. The ships were attacked by Ju 87s of III./St.G. 3 and three destroyers (Kharkov, Sposobny and Beposhchadny) are sunk. Do 24s are sent to rescue survivors but no one is found. After that disaster, STALIN forbids the employment of surface ships of destroyer size upwards without his permission.

On 9th, following the evacuation of the Kuban bridgehead, SK 18 goes from Ortasli See to Sevastopol. That advanced position is thus itself evacuated.

On 19th, FW 58 Wnr 2043 tries to save the pilot of a romanian fighter but it finds nobody.

The following day, an unknown plane is seen crashing in the sea ten km S.E. Jalta.

On 23rd, the two rescue vessels F. Laisz and H. Tjarks part from SeenotKdo XII. They will leave to Athens (SBK XI) and will travel through Dardanelles (which is permitted for unarmed ships).

On 24th, Do 24 DJ+ZG cannot find a reported dinghy with a crew.

On 29th, Ln Zug Mot 12 is sent too to SBK XI in Athens. The move is accelerated as a soviet tank vanguard is advancing very quickly on Perekop strip of land...

Planes used by 8. Seenot from February 1943 to October 1943

He 59:

TH+HM (Wnr 1524) No more mentionned after mid-October 43.

TH+HC (Wnr 1526) No more mentionned after mid-April 43

(perhaps that both were written-off by lack of spares).

Do 24

CM+IC (Wnr 37)

CM+IQ (Wnr 51)

CM+IU (Wnr 55)

CM+IV (Wnr 56) Left on 22nd June to Nordeney 4. Seenot and destroyed in North Sea on 23rd August 43.

CM+IZ (Wnr 60) Not mentionned in the war diary in that period.

VH+SD (Wnr 64) Left to 6. Seenot on 27th June 43 and destroyed in the Mediterranean on 7 Aug 43.

VH+SL (Wnr 72) Came around March 43.

DJ+ZG (Wnr 81) Came around March 43.

At the end of October 43, 8. Seenot had no more He 59 and around five Do 24s.

CHAPTER VI: THE LAST WINTER IN THE BLACK SEA [NOVEMBER '43/MARCH '44]

November '43

Following the soviet advance in Crimea, 8. Seenot must leave the area and fly from Sevastopol to Varna. The unit must move with its own forces and without any help...

On 2nd, some flying boats are sent to spot three lost little vessels. They are found but need no help.

On 3rd, SBK XII must leave to Constanța. Seenotkommando 18 remains in Crimea to co-ordinate the rescue operations. A FW 58 is sent to Eupatoria on the sides of romanian Escadrila 49.

On Crimea, after the quick advance of 4th Ukranian front (which captured Perekop on 1st November), the 17. Armee of Generaloberst Erwin JÄNECKE is cut from the other german units

on the mainland. The Generaloberst thought that Crimea could not be defended and proposed the evacuation. HITLER preferred to reinforce the 17. Armee via the air and the sea. New units came then in the area:

- I./TG 2 (Major Josef GRONS);
- III./TG 2 (Major Walter HORNUNG);
- II./TG 3 (Major Otto BAUMANN);
- III./TG 3 (Major PENKERT);
- I./TG 4 (Obstlt Josef KÖGL).

All those Gruppen are equipped with Ju 52s. Later will come:

- I./TG 5 (Major Günter MAUSS). That unit coming from the Mediterranean theater flew with the "giants" Me 323;

- III./TG 1 (Major Fridolin FATH). Equipped with italian SM 82s.

Many of those planes are stationed in Romania. It seems that TG 2 flew on the way Constanța/Sevastopol.

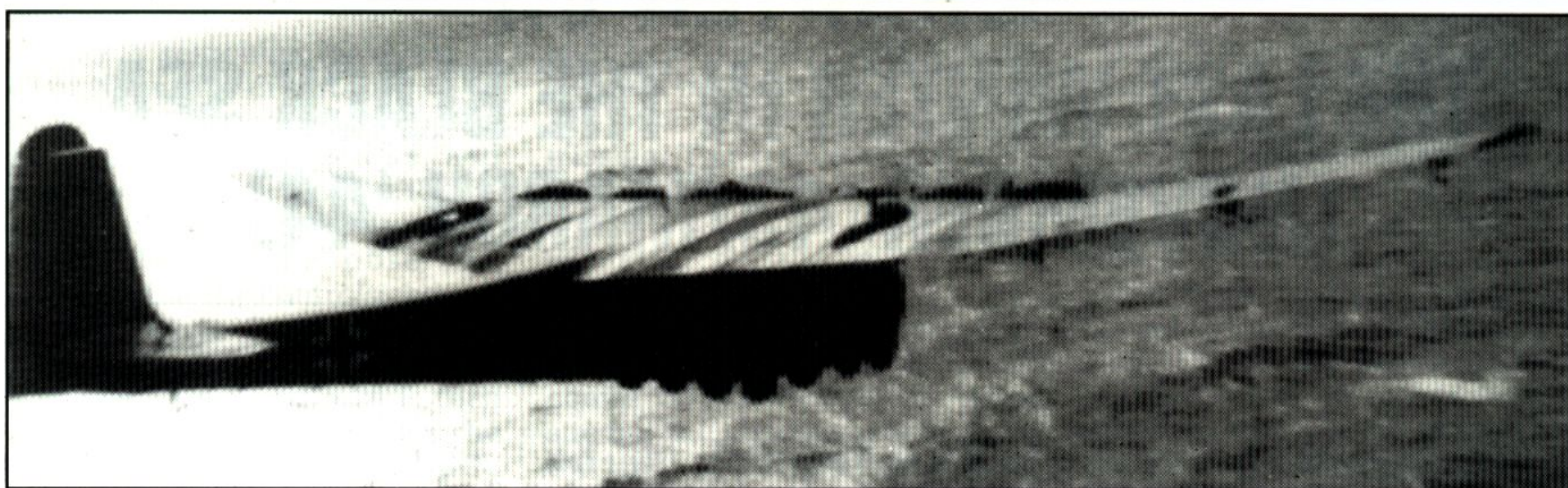
With the increasing losses, 8. Seenot will have more work... On 6th, a Do 24 is requested to find a lost Ju 52 on the way Cherson/Karankut. With no success...

On 7th, HQ and other sections of SBK XII can report that they are all in Constanța.

On 12nd, Do 24 CM+IC can land near a transport vessel in a torpedoed convoy. Four men heavily wounded are loaded in the plane.

Siutghiol. Alongside a BV 138 and a He 114 (Dan ANTONIU).





Escorted by a Do 24 of 8. Seenot, that Me 323 "Gigant" of I./TG 5 flies very low over the Black Sea (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

In December 1943, 8. Seenot must provide an escort to romanian Ju 87s moving over the Black Sea.

A MFP leaving Crimea enroute to a german-romanian held coast (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

Two days later, two Do 24s cannot find a dinghy with three men. On 24th, new move for SBK XII. The HQ is too far from the theater of operations and must go to Odessa. In the loading of the train, a wireless operator of the unit is wounded and must be left in the hospital of Constanța.

On 26th, another convoy is attacked by soviet planes near Odessa. A Do 24 starts but there is no casualty.

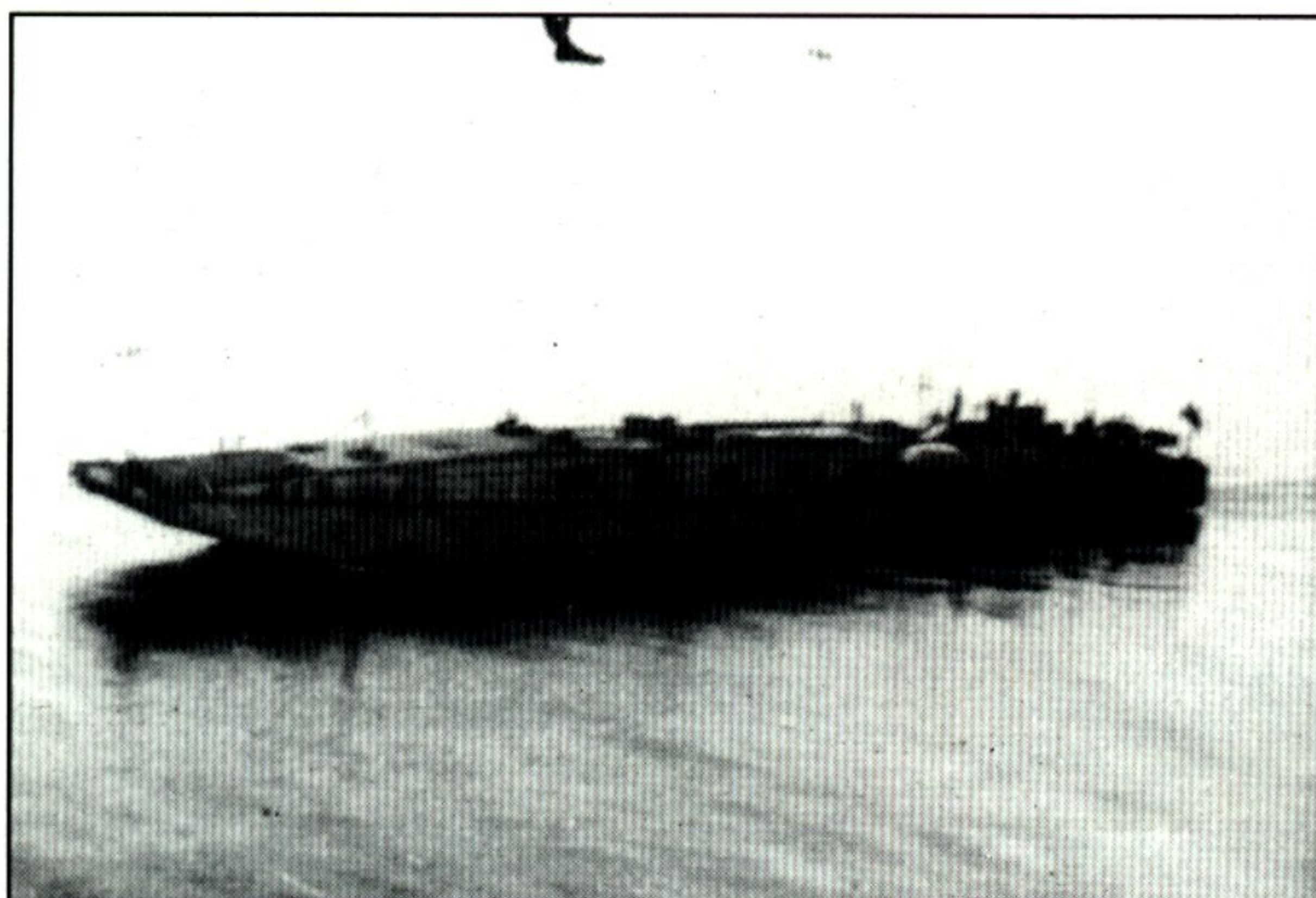
On 30th, the He 114s of the romanian Escadrila come at Aradschy-Bey, a bay near Odessa. As the unit must be supplied by the Germans, it seems easier to transfer the Squadron in Odessa harbour.

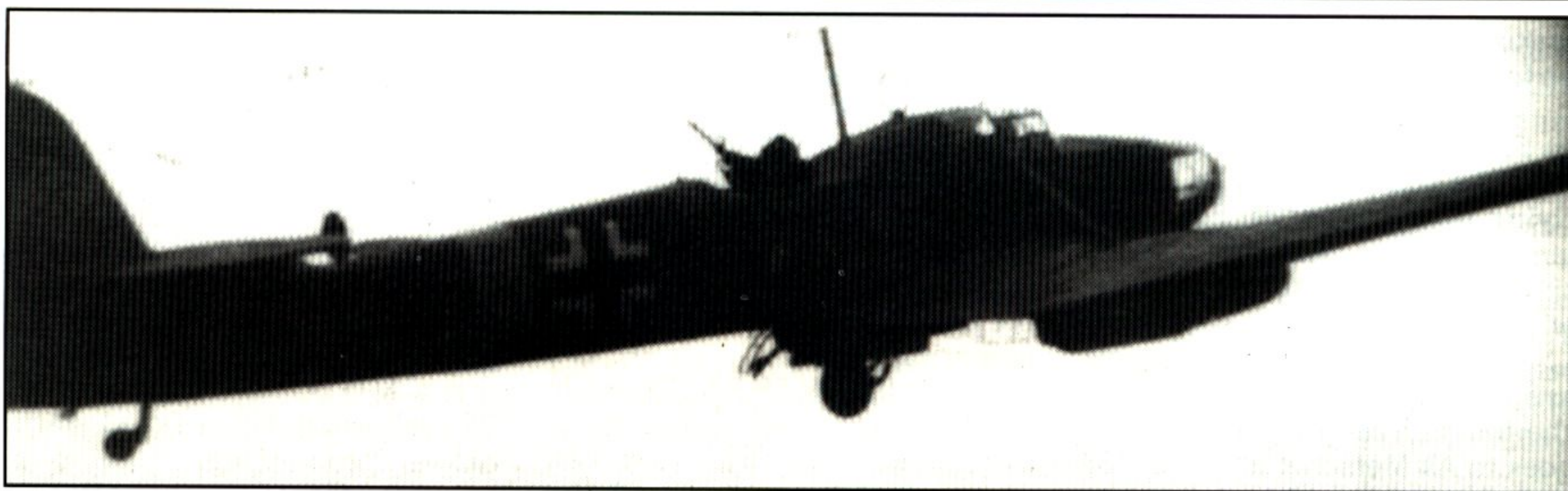
December '43

On 3rd, a plane of 3./SAG 125 is destroyed when landing near the Ohrid island. BV 138 C-1 WNr 311014 suffers damages of around 60%. Four crewmen are killed:

- Pilot, Ofw Karl WILHELM;
- Observer, Lt Günther ARNOLD;
- Wireless operator, Uffz. Emil WAGENBRENNER and
- Engineer, Ofw. Ernst MACHINEK.

The only survivor, the air gunner, Uffz. Heinz ARMÖHNER, is wounded. On 5th, minus problems for a romanian He 114 which can land on the sea. Fl.B. 426 leaves Constanța to take the float-plane in tow. That day, HQ of Transportfliegerführer 2 (which coordinates all the transport units for the supply of Crimea) leaves Uman to Odessa III.





A FW 58 of SBK XII
(Alfons REMMELBERGER).



A group of Ju 52s photographed
from the escorting Do 24
(Alfons REMMELBERGER).

The following day, a Do 24 of SK 18 makes a vain research to find a lost He 111. It will later be learnt that the bomber hit an obstacle on the mainland.

On 10th December, HQ of SBK XII is established in Bolschov Fontan, eleven kilometers far from Odessa. Many houses of the village are occupied by the men of the unit. The wireless communications with Odessa are very good. The romanian He 114s have left Aradschi-Bey to move to Odessa. In Aradschi Bey are placed some depots (one of fuel). Fl.B. 408 is too in Odessa harbour when Fl.B. 415 goes to Eupatoria. On 11th, the crew of a romanian Ju 87 of Grupul III is saved by a U-Jäger before the arrival of a Do 24. Two days later, another Do 24 escorts three romanian Ju 87s flying from Odessa to Saki.

On 15th, another romanian He 114 must land and is stranded near Constanța. Fl.B. 426 can tow it and come back the following day. But, that 15th December, a german U-Jäger hits a mine and sinks. The Do 24 sent over the area will only find wrecks and no survivor...

On 18th, a Ju 87 (being certainly german) has to land on the sea. The crew of two can climb in the dinghy but it will not be found. FW 58 WNr 2043 (NG+HG?) of 12.SBK flew that day to Cracovia, Poland to be overhauled. Over Slovakia, weather is very bad. The plane must fly very low and hits an obstacle. The three crewmen (Ofw. STROHMEYER, Uffz. HERBST and Uffz. WILL) are killed.

On 19th, the Seefliegerführer gives the air traffic lanes for the transport planes flying between Odessa and Crimea.

On 20th, researches are launched for a missing Ju 52. In fact, the trimotor crashed on the ground. As all the western area of Crimea is in the range of soviet fighters, one must fear losses of transport planes. Fl.B. 415 must then move to Ak Metschet to be ready to help shot down crewmen.

On 22nd, weather is so bad that Fl.B. 408 called to rescue a vessel of 30. Geleitsflotille cannot leave its harbour (Odessa). The following day, a convoy must pass through the area and will try to find the missing boat.

On 27th, romanian fighters claim two soviet Bostons. A Do 24 is sent to the crash sites but cannot find anything.

The last day of the month sees the arrival of two Do 24s at Varna. Those planes are affected to 8. Seenot and have WNr 1031 and 3266.

January '44

On the first day of the Year 1944, Kommandeur AIGNER, C.O. of the SBK flies to Simferopol to meet the Seefliegerführer, the Obstlt. BAUER. The situation is delicate and there are many problems.

On 3rd, two Do 24s start to spot a lost plane. They have an important fighter escort as the area is full of soviet aircraft. But one Dornier must abort after engine problem; the other one cannot find the missing aircraft.

On 4th, 5th and 7th, two Do 24s fly in escort of Ju 52s (mainly of TG 2) flying to or from Crimea.

On 8th, 12. Seenotflotille receives itself reinforcements. Fl.B. 424 and 433 arrive at Constanța via the Danube.

The escort flights for Junkers 52s go on. On 11st, a soviet Pe-2 is shot down off Odessa. Fl.B. 408 (whose crewmen took part in that victory) leaves the harbour to

rescue survivors but no one will be found.

On 12nd, vain research for a Ju 52 shot down by soviet fighters. The following day, a Bf 110 flying in escort of Ju 52s must land on the sea, victim of a defective engine. The two-man crew will not be found.

On 14th, two rescue vessels are sent to Crimea to reinforce the units already there. Fl.B. 426 goes to Ak Metschet and Fl.B. 433 to Eupatoria. On 15th, the waters at Aradshi Bey begin to freeze. The two Do 24s present there must leave to Varna. The same day, two Ju 52s are shot down but, heavily loaded, they sink in a short time and the Do 24 sent to the area cannot save anyone.

The ice period is a new problem for the rescue units. As no Dornier can remain in or near

Odessa, the Ju 52s flying on the route Odessa/Crimea will to be escorted by flying boats coming from Varna, a long way for those seaplanes. The Do 24s coming from Bulgaria must stop in Odessa harbour to be refuelled and all must be ready to receive the planes (clearing of the ice and preparing the fuel).

On 17th, FW 58 BA+BN crashes on the frozen sea. The plane is destroyed but the crew can escape unhurt and board the dinghy. Ofw. HANDKE's crew is quickly rescued.

The following day, a german U-Jäger is torpedoed and a Do24 can save three sailors wounded. Odessa is no more fit for flying boats.

All the week, many flights are made to escort Ju 52s formations going to Crimea.

On 24th, a romanian Ju 52 is lost over the sea. Nothing will be found. On 25th, Do 24 WNr 3266 must land on the sea. It is helped by Fl.B. 433 and can take off again.

On 27th, vain researches to find the crew of a soviet long range reconnaissance plane which crashed in the Black Sea.

February '44

The support flights are maintained for all the month.

**Last wartime C.O.
of Flotila de Hidroaviație
cpt. cdr. Gheorghe BORCESCU**

**Do 24s moored in Odessa harbour
(Heinz BLIEFERT).**



On 2nd, Odessa harbour can be used by seaplanes and a Do 24 comes again to be moored.

On 6th, a Ju 188 is lost. A Do 24 is sent to the spot. It is helped (on escorted?) by three He 111s of KG 4 and Küstenstaffel Krim. But with no result.

On 8th, Flugsicherungshilfsstelle of Burgaz (Bulgaria) signals that a SOS is launched by a Ju 52. The following day, a Do 24 starts but will find nothing.

Fl.B. 415 (Sevastopol) and Fl.B. 433 (Eupatoria) are both damaged. They must be repaired at Constanța. Fl.B. 424 is then sent from Constanța to Eupatoria to fill the gap.

On the evening of 9th February, Fl.B. 408 can find a romanian He 114 which landed near Cape Midia. It is towed until Constanța harbour.

On 11st, a BV 138 of SAG 125 must land. A Do 24 comes on the spot but its crew discovers that the flying boat has enough power to "sail" until Varna.

Very bad weather begins on 16th. Fl.B. 424 is surprised by the storm but can find shelter in Kradscha Bay (Cape Farchankut). The following day, two MFPs (each loaded with 150 soldiers) are thrown on the coast in the Danube Delta. The storm prevents any take-off of planes. On 18th, BV 138 WNr 130180 of 3./SAG 125 is 30% damaged by the stormy winds. It is only on 19th that Fl.B. 404 and a Do 24 can go to the Danube Delta; but the two MFPs are empty, the soldiers having escaped by themselves... The following weeks, weather becomes better and the escort flights start again.

On 24th, new reunion of Major AIGNER and Obstlt BAUER. Gen. Lt. WEICHMAN, C.O. of I.Fl.K., comes to visit the installations of SBK XII at Bolschov-Fontan.

March '44

On 4th, researches are launched for a Ju 52 which, endly, lands on firm ground.

On 10th, Do 24 WNr 3266 spots a lost He 111 of KG 4. The flying boat lands near a dinghy and rescues four crewmen (a fifth, the air gunner, is missing).

The following day, a Do 24 escorts a He 111 of Küstenstaffel Krim. The bomber flies with only one engine and, after crossing the coast, the Dornier must leave it. That 11st, Fl.B. 433 takes in tow a romanian He 114 and brings it back to Constanța harbour. It seems that, in that period squadron has some problems for the maintenance of its planes.

13rd March is a black day for 8. Seenot. At 7.43 H, Do 24 WNr 3266 takes off from Sevastopol. He is then attacked by soviet fighters and shot down. Fl.B. 408 leaves immediately Odessa to rescue survivors. Do 24 DJ+ZG (WNr 81) starts while two Bf 110 of 5./JG 200 (Odessa) are sent to the area. DJ+ZG is itself attacked by enemy fighters and does not

answer to the Seenotzentrale. A pack of 35 Ju 52s with an escort of seven Ju 88s is warned. The formation is deployed to comb the area. One crew of Ju 88 will discover two oil patches both very near...

That 13rd, a plane of II./KG 4 must land on the sea. Do 24 CM+IV (WNr 37) rescues five crewmen and can recover one body. Researches are launched to

find survivors of the two Dorniers. On 14th, Oberst KLINTZSCH, inspector of the Seenotdienst coming from Athens to Constanța, forbids the day operations of the Do 24s without fighter escort.

On 15th, proof of the destruction of the two flyingboats: a dinghy is found with the corpse of Sanitätsgefreiter SCHARRER, air gunner of Do 24 WNr 3266...

Odessa, 28 March 44. From l. to r.: Fw. Theodor PÖTTER (KIA 17 Oct 44 in Volos, Greece), Ogfr. Alfons REMMELBERGER and Fw. HOSE (Alfons REMMELBERGER).

28 March 44. Ogfr. Alfons REMMELBERGER on his Do 24 in Odessa harbour (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



His legs are broken and, with his last forces, the young man could climb in the dinghy to die in the open air...

On 16th, another romanian He 114 has to land. The tow rope broke that day and one must wait the following day to see the floatplane entering Constanța harbour.

On 18th, at Ak-Metschet, Fl.B. 426 is strafed by soviet fighters. Damages are minor but a sailor, Gefr. BECKER, is wounded.

On 19th, when Kommandeur

and Nachr. Offz. (communications officer) of SBK XII go to Berlin via Constanța and Bucharest, order comes at 17.30 H. to evacuate Bolschov-Fontan. Seenotkommando 19 (Major BRUSCH) must take the quarters of SBK XII. That unit must come back to Constanța. The vessels of 12. Seenotflotille are then called back:

- Fl.B. 426 leaves Ak-Metschet to Eupatoria;

- Fl.B. 408 goes from Odessa to Constanța;

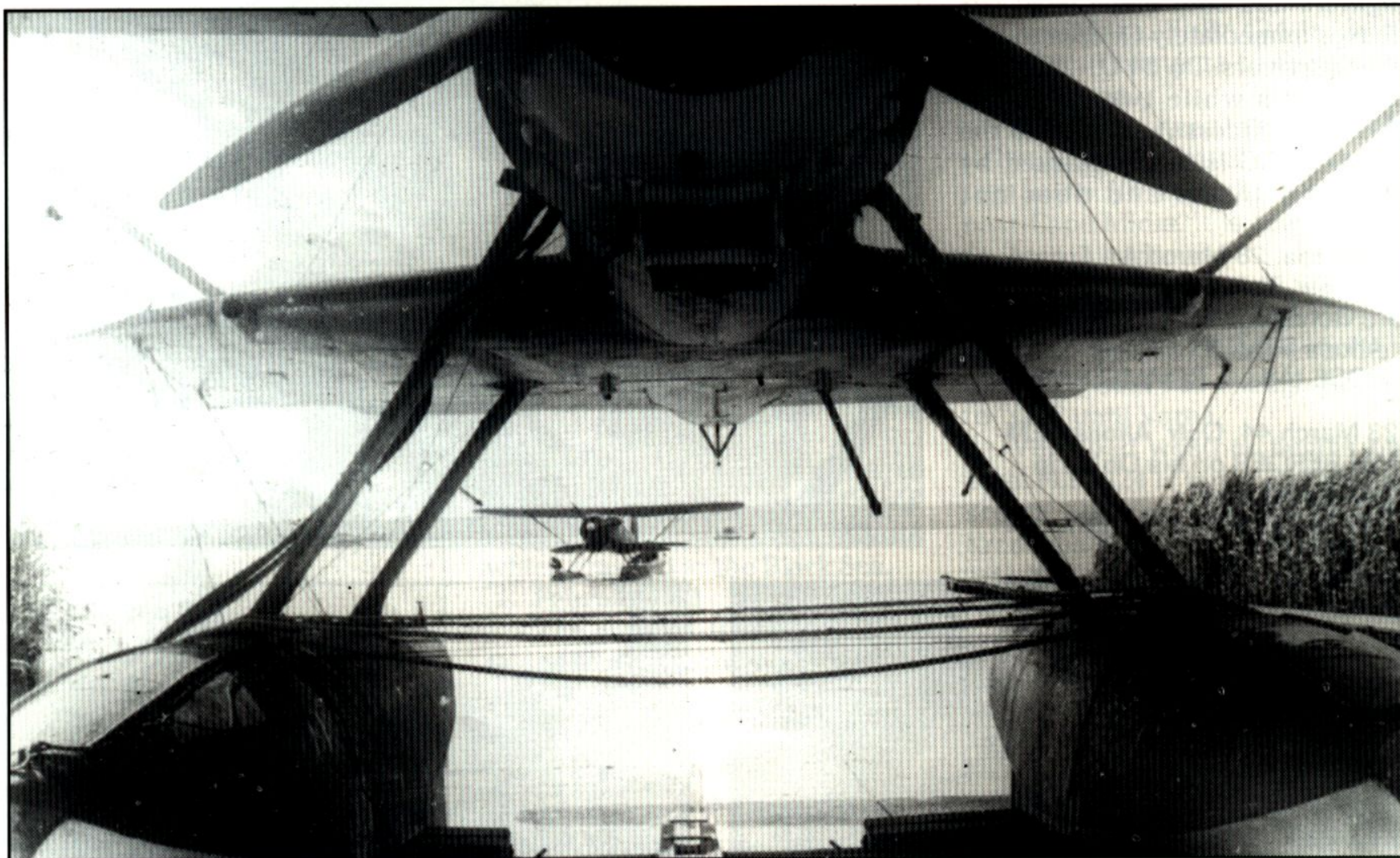
- Fl.B. 424 damaged at

Eupatoria will be towed to Sevastopol;

- On 20 th, Fl.B. 404 (at Constanța) goes to Odessa.

Until the end of the month, the shuttles are constant between Odessa and Constanța; but only one vessel is available for the transport of the material.

At the end of March, SK 19 is established at Bolschov-Fontan. The flying boats present at Odessa must cooperate with the Aufklärungsführer (C.O. of the reconnaissance unit) of Akkerman (Cetatea Albă).



Romanian Heinkel He-114s on the Siutghiol Lake.

Do 24 used by 8.Seenot from November 1943 to the end of March 1944

Do 24: CM+IC (Wnr 37)

CM+IQ (Wnr 51). No more mentioned in that period.

CM+IU (Wnr 55). No more mentioned in that period.

(Those two flying boats are perhaps given or lent to transport units?)

CM+IZ (Wnr 60)

VH+SL (Wnr 72)

DJ+ZG (Wnr 81). Shot down by soviet fighters on 13rd March '44.

? (Wnr 1031). Came on 31st December '43.

? (Wnr 3266). Came on 31st December '43. Shot down by soviet fighters on 13rd March '44.

? (Wnr 3304). Came on 13rd March '44.

At the end of March 1944, 8. Seenot seems to have only five Dornier 24s.

CHAPTER VII: THE LAST MONTHS (APRIL '44 - 23 AUGUST '44)

April '44

At the beginning of the month, H.Q. of Transportfliegerführer 2 leaves Odessa III to establish at Focșani. On 1st, H.Q. of SBK XII is at Constanța. There are not enough buildings but the most are ex-SK 19 quarters (mainly in the Strada Traian). Many men of the unit must find shelters in Carmen-Sylva on the coast, 18 km S. of Constanța.

On 3rd, it is reported that Fl.B. 404 is missing. In the evening, it will be learnt that the vessel, lost in a storm, could attain Sulina. On 5th, all the available Do 24s are called to Odessa (only one must remain in Sevastopol). And, on 6th, three Do 24s (WNR 37, 60 and 3304) fly shuttle (transport) from Odessa to Galați.

On 7th, SK 19 must evacuate Bolschov-Fontan under the pressure of the soviet advance. The Kommando goes to Odessa harbour. And two days later, the officers embark on Fl.B. 404 to go to Valcov in the Danube Delta. The harbour of Odessa is systematically blown-up. The Do 24s become transport planes and bring thirty tons of transmission material and fifty men of airfield 2/XI from Odessa to Galați.

From 10th April, the flying boats of 8. Seenot must fly to Crimea and take part at the evacuation operations. All plane must fly three missions a day. Two Fl.B.s are affected too to those operations. 8. Seenot comes back at Siutghiol and an officer is the link between the unit and SBK XII.

On 11st April, Transportfliegerführer 2 receives two new transport units:

- Tr. Gr. 30 of Major Walter HORNUNG (equipped with He 111s);

- I./LLG 1 of Hauptmann Johann FAE (equipped with He 111s and Go 242s);

On 12nd, at 6.06 H. order is given to transport at all costs 320 men (with their weapons) from Crimea to Constanța (all in 24 hours!). Four Do 24s are sent to Crimea when two other ones fly as an escort. That day, SK 18 comes at Varna (from Sevastopol).

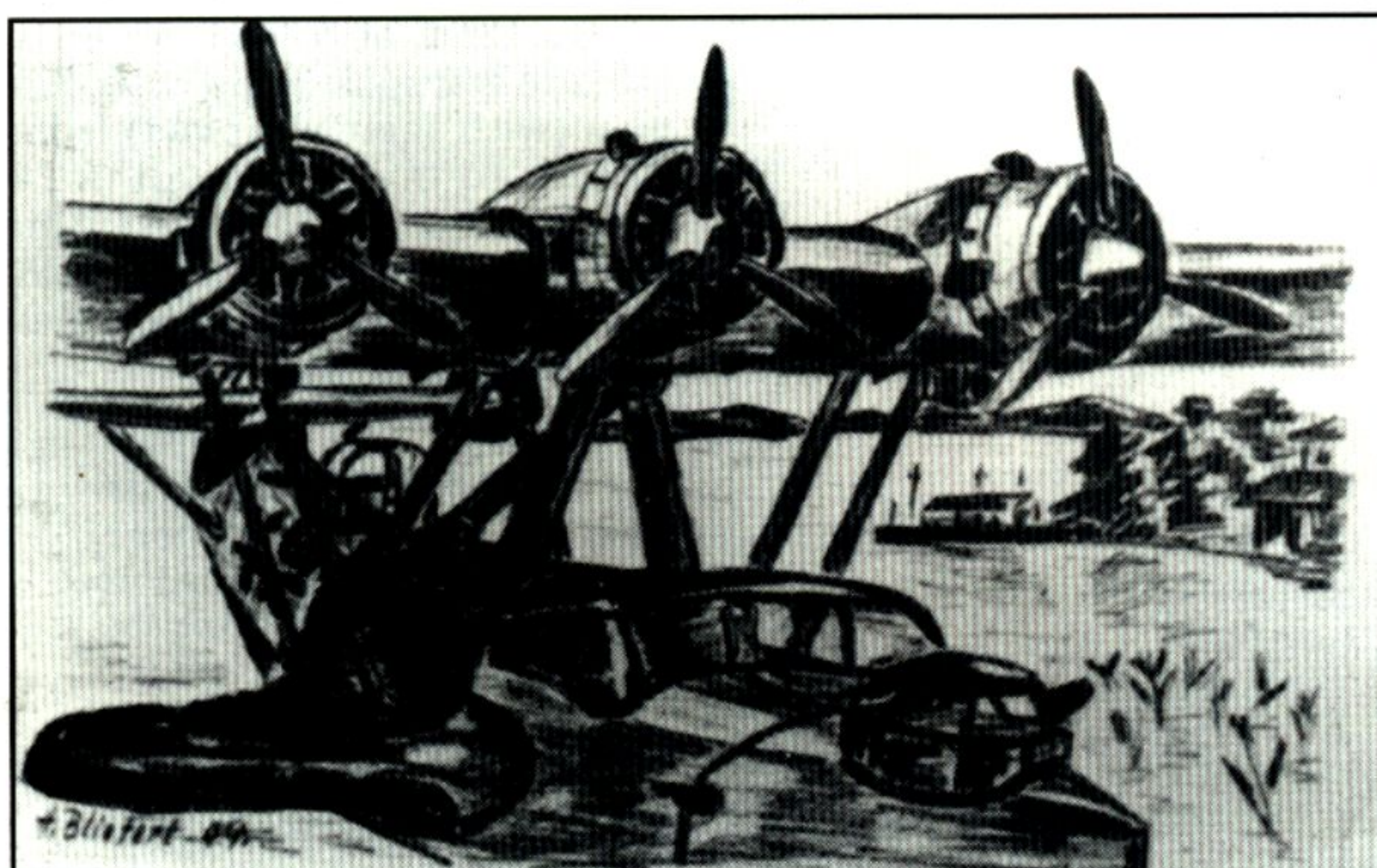
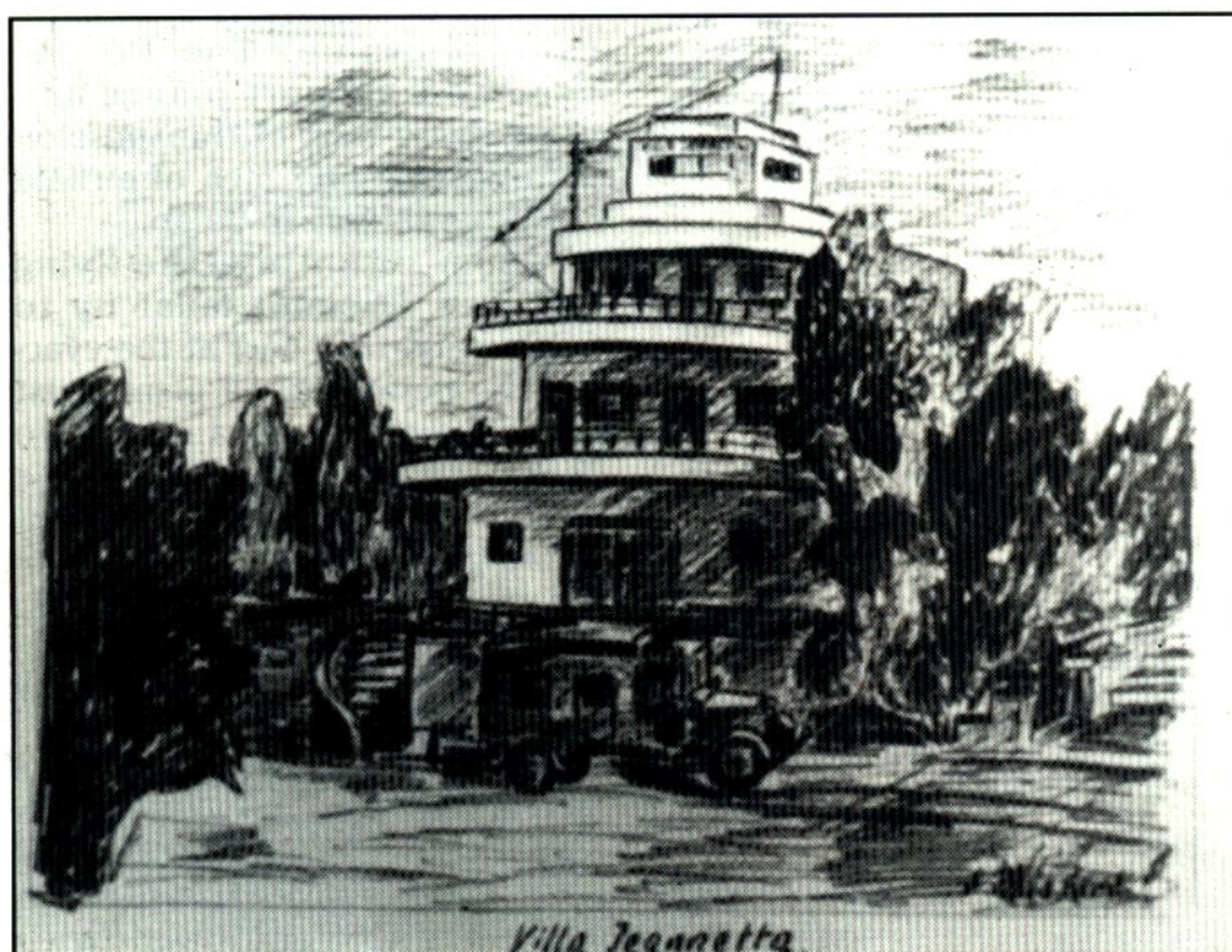
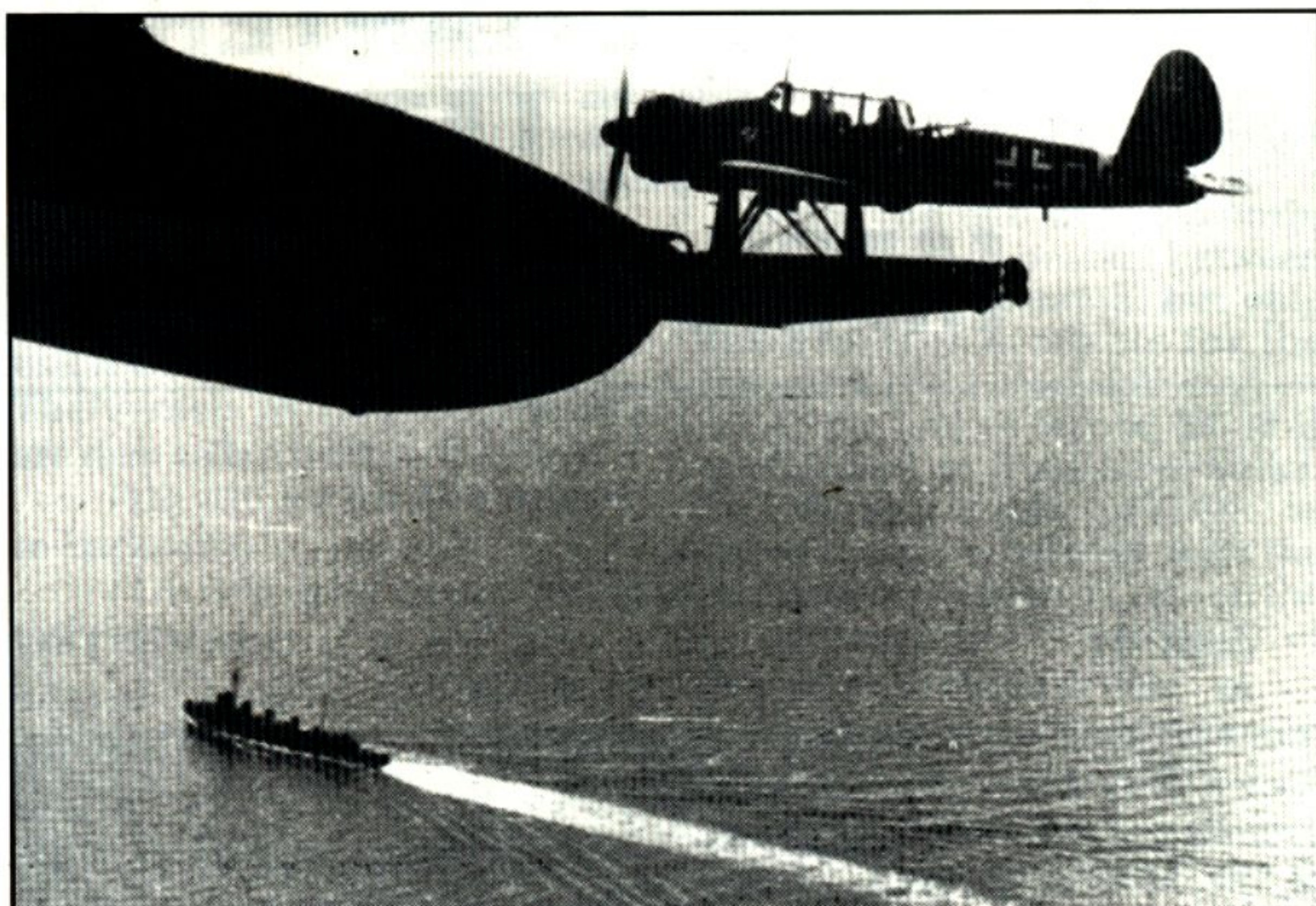
On 7th April 1944, Odessa harbour is blown-up. Sea mines buried in the quays all the three meters explode destroying the installations (Heinz BLIEFERT).

Men of 8. Seenot can leave at time Odessa. They assist at the destruction of the harbour (Heinz BLIEFERT).



Escort of a romanian convoy protected by the destroyer Mărăști. The seaplanes belong certainly to SAG 125. (Romanian Airforce never had Ar 196s).

On 13rd, a He 111 of Wekusta 76 crashes in the sea. A Do 24 is unnecessarily sent to the spot because report is false. The twin-engine plane crashed in fact on firm ground... A little later, a dinghy is spotted but cannot be found. Researchs are launched again the following day; too for three men seen swimming. But no one will be found... As the Do 24s of 8. Seenot have enough to do and as a disaster (e.g. the sinking



of a transport vessel) is always close, it is decided to do what was done in winter 42/43 in the supply operations of the Kuban bridgehead. A Sonderstaffel will be created (with Dornier 24s from other units). Its Staffelkapitän will be Hptm GUTHOFF (coming from 7. Seenot of Athens).

On 15th, two Do 24s (WNR 1033 and 3268) land at Siutghiol. Both are from 7. Seenot.

On 16th, a Ju 52 is shot down but no survivor is found. An enemy submarine is reported hit but researchs are vain.

That 16th, four new Do 24s come in Romania:

- WNR 403 and 3303 of 6. Seenot and
- WNR 3332 and 3362 of 9. Seenot.

On 17th, six wounded from a strafed convoy are rescued by two Do 24s. That day, arrival of two Do 24s:

- WNR 90 of 6. Seenot;
- WNR 1009 of 3. Seenot.

The evacuation by the sea is very active. The convoys are pro-

Last quiet moments in Siutghiol. Lt Heinz BLIEFERT, 2nd in command of 8. Seenot, made those drawings when not engaged in escort or rescue operations. The "Villa Jeanetta" is the "Gefechtsstand" (=H.Q.) of 8. Seenot in Mamaia (Heinz BLIEFERT).

tected by the escort vessels under the command of the german Vize-Admiral Helmuth BRINKMANN and the romanian contra-amiral Horia MĂRCELARIU.

On 18th, H.Q.s of SBK XII moves from Constanța to Mamaia to be nearest of 8. Seenot at Siutghiol. The communications are bad between the two former H.Q. and that shifting gives more efficacy to the actions of the flying boats.

In the morning, an unknown plane crashes near Cape Midia; nothing is found. Another Do 24 is sent to the area where a FW 190 is reported lost. But again no pilot is rescued.

At 13.06 H., the previewed disaster occurs! The troop transporter, the steamer Alba Iulia (5700 tons), is hit by bombs. The vessel is disabled and a furious struggle begins. The soviet submarine L-6 which wanted to attack the Alba Iulia is itself sunk by UJ 104 while M-112 is driven off. From Mamaia and Varna, ten Do 24s start: WNr 51, 60, 72, 90, 1009, 1031, 1033, 3232, 3262 and 3268. In that mission, WNr 3262 does not come back. That 18th, Do 24 WNr 3303 flying from Sevastopol to Siutghiol meets bad weather and must land.

The following day, researchs are launched. WNr 3303 is found by another Do 24 (temporarily based on the Carmen Sylva Lake) and, helped, it can take off very quickly. But one only can find the wrecks of WNr 3262 which crashed on the sea in the mist. A diver will spot parts of the cabin at four/five meters deep. Fl.B. 404 will recover the bodies of three flyers:

- Oblt. SCHÖNWETTER;
- Ogfr. BEYER and
- Ogfr. WEIGT.

The three other crewmen:

- Ofw. JAHNKE;
- Uffz. BAIER and
- Ogr. RESL will be reported as missing.

Patrol of 8. Seenot over the Black Sea (Heinz BLIEFERT).

On 19th again, two Do 24s search a lost BV 138 (certainly of SAG 125). Nothing will be found but, on the way, one flying boat is attacked by soviet fighters (with minor damages).

On 20th, I.Fl.K. signals that SBK XII is under the control of Aufü (Aufklärungsführer = C.O. of the reconnaissance units) Schwarzes Meer. No operation can be flown that day considering bad weather. But at Varna, arrival of a new Do 24. M6+CL (WNr 1006) comes from 3. Seenot to reinforce the Sonderstaffel.

The escort flights can take place again the following day. On 23rd, a Ju 52 falls in the sea near Mamaia. Fl.B. 404 comes quickly on the spot but can only find the body of a romanian soldier and some wrecks (including mae west, and so on...). In the beginning of the afternoon, a Ju 88 crashes in the sea but nobody is found.

As many transport planes are expected, a rescue vessel is stationed near the land airfield of Mamaia as one fears some losses by the landings. On 23rd, two romanian He 114s are lost with his crew.

On 24th, WNr 1006 and 3303 can rescue eight wounded from a strafed convoy. WNr 3268 saves a soviet observer, Lt TITKOW, who is adrifted in his dinghy. The prisoner is then delivered to I.Fl.K. for informations.

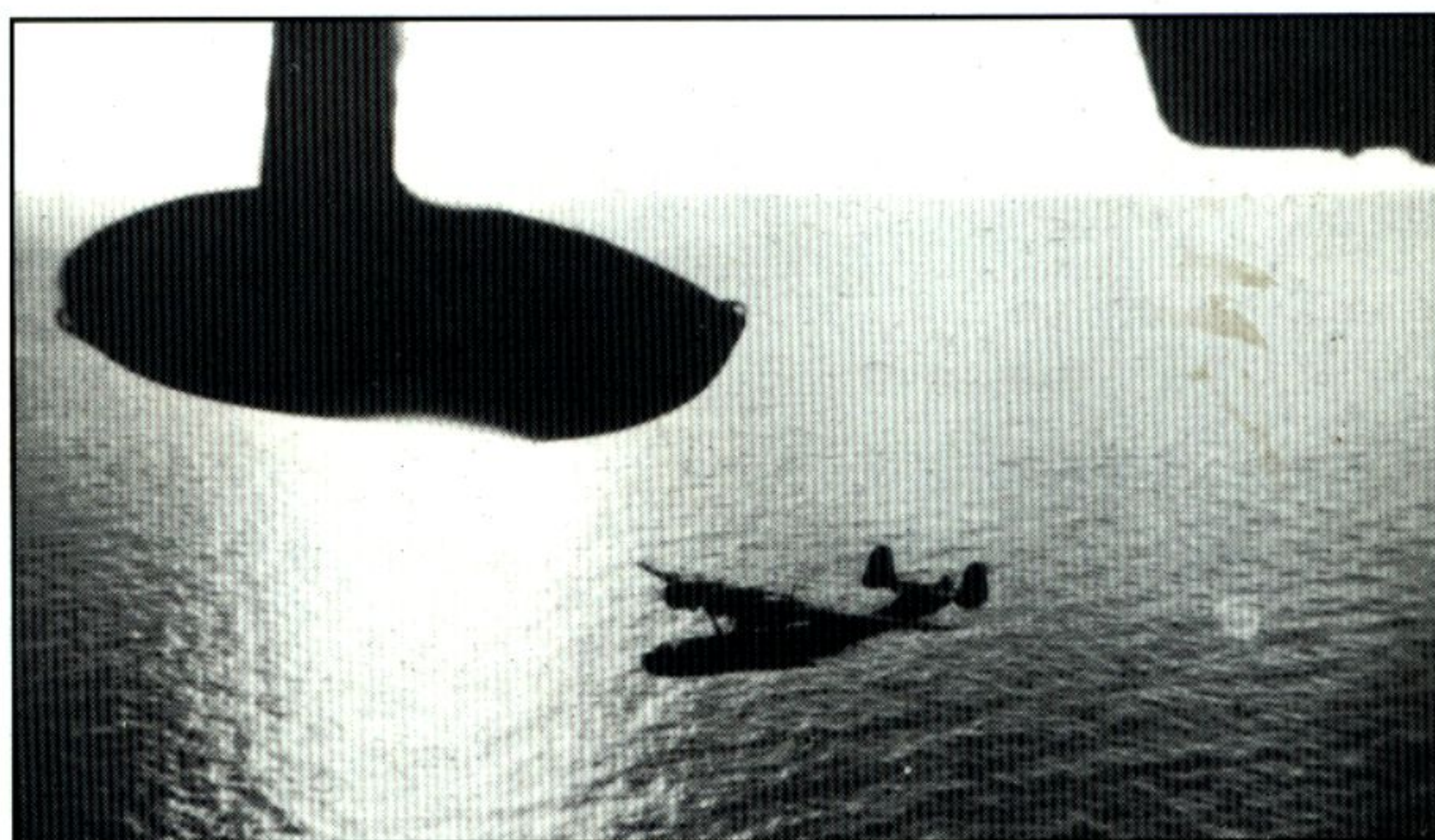
On 25th, a towed tug is attacked by bombs and sinks. Six

Do 24s (WNr 1064, 2132, 3232, 3268, 3303 and 3304) can come back with 63 wounded. A FW 190 is reported falling in the sea but two Do 24s cannot find anything. That day, arrival at Constanța of Do 24 WNr 2132 coming from 9. Seenot.

On 27th, a Do 24 lands near three dinghies all empty! At Varna, arrival of Do 24 WNr 2101 of 6. Seenot.

On 28th, a soviet Boston is shot down; Fl.B. 426 can rescue the rear gunner. Do 24 WNr 1003 leaves Constanța to Athens (to be exchanged for another plane). But that day, CM+IC (WNr 37) is victim of a short circuit and takes fire. It will be entirely destroyed. Three men of the technical personal are lightly wounded when trying to save the plane. On 30rd April, a He 111 (perhaps of I./KG 4) crashes in the sea. Two Do 24s start but waves and winds prevent them to land near a dinghy with two crewmen. Happily contact can be established with 10. Sicherungsdivision and a R-Boot (being in the vicinity) can be sent to the area. A Do 24 circles over the dinghy leaving only when the clouds are to low. Colorants are dropped before departure. The two flyers fire coloured rockets and are endly rescued by the R-Boot.

In April, the Seenotflugzeugen flew 26 operations. 525 men and ten tons of material are brought from Sevastopol to Constanța. In



one operation, Fl.B. 404, 408 and 433 brought 56 men and six tons of material.

The war diary of SBK XII does not mention the arrival of Do 24 CM+RR at Varna on 28th April 44. But, in his Flugbuch (log book), Fw. Lutz GOSEPATH gives many informations. After the loss of his Do 24 VH+SD near Olbia (Sardinia) on 7th August 1943, the young pilot remained in the Mediterranean until April 44. On 17th April, with his usual crew, GOSEPATH took off from Travemünde with Do 24 CM+RR (presumed WNr 3331). Via Brandenburg and Belgrade, the floatplane attained Corabia (W. of Turnu Măgurele) and then was forced to land on the Danube, two engines being damaged. The crew remained three days at Corabia after some attempts to take off. Finally, helped by another Do 24 which brought spares, CM+RR could take off to join Varna. There it seems that the Do 24 was repainted as 1M+RR (that habit to change the codes when coming in another unit was perhaps done to deceive the ennemy... but the historians will have many problems to trace the history of each plane!). 1M+RR will mainly remained moored at Varna and Constanța, always handicapped by its engine problems. Perhaps that its tasks will resume in shut-

tles between the two harbours. The first mention of that plane will only be found in the war diary of SBK XII in the month of August...

At the end of the month, 1. and 2./SAG 125 leave Crimea to the other side of the Black Sea. 2./SAG 125 flies to Mamaia-Siutghiol; 1./SAG 125 joins Varna in Bulgaria.

May '44

On 1st, vain researches to find a lost Ju 52.

On 2nd, new loss of a Do 24. WNr 3303 anchored in the Chersones bay is dragged out from its buoy and thrown against a reef. It sinks in a few minutes.

On 3rd, a Ju 52 has an engine fire. A Do 24 is sent to the rescue but the transport plane can land in Chersones. WNr 1006 starts to save four wounded sailors of a UJ damaged by bombs.

On 4th, new move for SK 19. It leaves Valcov to Carmen Sylva.

On 6th, in a soviet attack, a ship is sunk by bombs. The survivors are rescued by the convoy but Do 24 WNr 1074 must come to load six wounded. Do 24 WNr 79 can rescue two crewmen of a lost Bf 110.

On 7th, another soviet flyer is picked up from the sea by a Fl.B. A Bf 109 is lost too but pilot can swim to the coast and the Fl.B. comes "too late". That day, Sevastopol is recaptured by the Soviets.

The following day, a dinghy with four men is spotted. Do 24 WNr 2112 cannot land, the waves being too strong. The flying boat can call a Minensuchboot in the vicinity and the vessel rescues the four men. That day, Do 24 WNr 3268 is sent to rescue a He 111 crew. But, on the way, the Dornier is shot down by soviet fighters. XII SBK launches a quick rescue mission. Only four bodies will be found:

- Ofw. BRANDT;
- Uffz. SOLTWEDEL;
- Uffz. FRÖMBERG and
- Ogfr. RUBIN.

The two other crewmen of WNr 3268:

- Fw. ENKE and
- Fw. NASTANSKI are listed as missing.

That day too, 8. Seenot suffers another loss, that time without death of crewmen. WNr 1074 is destroyed by bombs as anchored in the Chersones bay.

In the night of 8/9th May, another disaster strucks Sonderstaffel Mamaia. Do 24 WNr 2132 is heavily loaded with eleven passengers. It lands by night at Chersones and must hit an obstacle. The flying boat is destroyed. Only two crewmen can be saved:

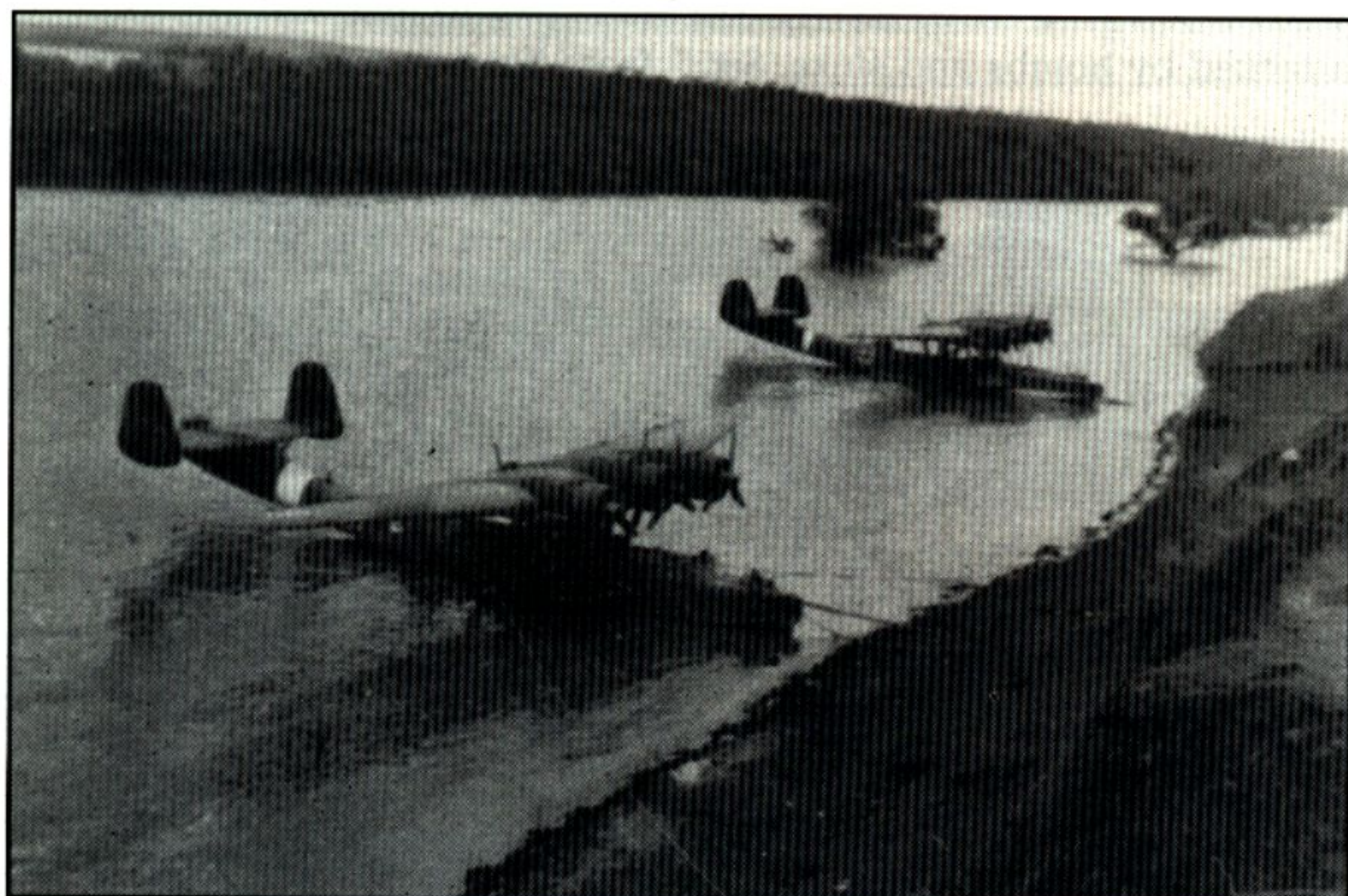
- Uffz. BEHLERT and
- Uffz. ADAM.

The four other crewmen:

- Hptm GUTHOFF, Staffelkapitän of the Sonderstaffel;
- Fw. WAGNER;
- Ofw. GELHAUSEN and
- Uffz. BAUMHUS are killed. All the passengers:

- a man of 8. Seenot and
- ten soldiers of airfield 125/XI (including an officer, Major ASPRION) are too killed in that crash...

On 25 April 44, Fw. Lutz GOSEPATH comes back in Romania manning Do 24 CM+RR. Victim of engine problems, he has to land on the Danube at Corabia. On 28 April, after being helped by another Do 24 crew, he can take off and arrive at Varna (Siegfried HOFFMANN via Franz SELINGER).



On 10th May, a transport ship is sunk. Five Do 24s (WNR 51, 60, 1009, 1064 and 2102) start but, again, waves are too strong. Dinghies and rescue materials are dropped. The crewmen can see men climbing in some dinghies. WNR 3304 is called by a distress signal. In its area, waves are more quiet and the Dornier lands and takes on board eight german soldiers. The following day, the five Do 24 take off again to gain the spot of the shipwreck. Unhappily only.... seven men will be rescued. All others died of hypothermia.

The rest of the day, two flying boats come back with thirteen wounded from a MFP and a ship.

That 11st is the official date of the end of the operations of the Crimea evacuation. 130000 german and romanian soldiers are evacuated by sea and 21457 others by air between 12nd April and 13rd May. 78000 soldiers are left in Crimea. During that period, units paid a high price. Tr. Gr. 30 lost alone six He 111s (28 crewmen killed and four wounded). The Dornier 24s engaged in those missions lost five planes (seventeen men killed, including a Staffelpkapitän, and two wounded). The other transport units or escort must have suffered the same loss ratio...

On 12nd, six Do 24s land near a MFP loaded with... thousand wounded soldiers. Twenty-two of them are embarked in the flying boats to be brought to the Lazarett. That day, the romanian Escadrila loses another plane. He 114 N° 25 is destroyed in an incident.

Always on 12nd, Fl.B. 415 on the way to Crimea (perhaps to

give help to some disabled ships) is rerouted to a transport ship sunk by a soviet dive bomber. Thirty-nine men are embarked and three soldiers wounded are loaded in a Do 24. Then, Fl.B. 415 comes back to Constanța. The last romanian-german ships are on the way to freedom. 8th Air Army (Lt Gen KRYUKIN) and 4th Air Army (Col Gen VERSHININ) try to sink as most vessels as possible. 8. Seenot is then very busy.

On 13rd, Fl.B. 433 enters in Constanța harbour with seventy-nine rescued soldiers on board. Nine other ones are rescued later in the day. Do 24 WNR 2102 lands near a dinghy and picks up eight men; Do 24 WNR 51 comes back with a wounded soldier from a MFP damaged by bombs.

On 14th, Do 24 WNR 51 spots another dinghy and saves seven men. But, the following day two Dorniers will only find a dinghy and a Sturmboot... both empty. The soldiers certainly drowned.

On 18th, SK 18 moves to Varna-Konstantin.

The end of the month is more quiet. But, on 25th, a BV 138 (perhaps of 2. or 3./125) crashes in the sea 200 meters off Mamaia. No survivor will be found and it seems that divers could not recover bodies of the crewmen.

On 30rd a plane is seen floating on the Black Sea. A Do 24 is sent there but cannot find anything.

In that month of May, 8. Seenot and Sonderstaffel Mamaia are always requested to



June 44. In a Siutghiol hangar:

from left to right: pilot adj. ?, Lt. Chiril STERIANCOVSCHI, Asp. Nicolae MUJICICOV and Asp. Ion POPESCU all Navy personnel acting as observers in the Flotila de Hidroaviație

Facing the soviet advance, the Aussenstelle Varna is more and more visited by the Do 24s (Alfons REMMELBERGER).



rescue victims of wrecks. That explains that the transport missions are reduced. Thirty-eight soldiers are brought back to Constanța by the Dorniers. 138 other ones are loaded on Fl.B. 426 and Fl.B. 433.

End of that month, 2./SAG 125 seems to leave the Black Sea area. 1. and 3./SAG 125 remain to be reunited in Mamaia.

June '44

On 3rd, a Do 24 lands near a dinghy... but it is empty.

On 9th, the operations being ended, Sonderstaffel Mamaia is disbanded. We cannot give with certitude the list of all the Dorniers used in that special and temporarily unit. We only have a short list of Do 24s being sent back to their units of origin:

A Do 24 of 8. Seenot (??+?K) off Mamaia in the last weeks of the german presence in Romania (Heinz BLIEFERT).

Do 24 T-2 DJ+ZP (WNr 90) came in the Black Sea from 6. Seenot. It is seen here unloading at Sevastopol as part of Sonderstaffel Mamaia (the censor has suppressed some buildings in the background). In June 44, WNr 90 is given to 8. Seenot.



- WNr 79, 2101 and 2103 fly to Athens;

- WNr 1006, 1009 and 3232 go to Vienna;

- Do 24 DJ+ZP (WNr 90), an ex-plane of 6. Seenot remains in Black Sea as part of 8. Seenot.

In the following days, many lifeboats are spotted but all are empty. On 11st, 157 B-24s of the american XVth Airforce take off from Southern Italy to bomb Constanța. That target is not priority. It is chosen to attract the fighters of the romanian defence. In fact, the attack is a total failure as bombs fall in the sea far from the harbour. That intrusion is not mentioned in the war diary of XII SBK.

On 16th, FW 58 are themselves dispersed. WNr 2 and 1960 leave the area.

On 17th, three new Dornier 24s leave the Black Sea to join 9. Seenot at Bug auf Rügen. WNr 60 and 72 are "veterans" of 8. Seenot. WNr 1064 is perhaps a plane of Sonderstaffel Mamaia.

On 18th, UJ 316 explodes on a soviet mine near Sulina. But 8. Seenot is not requested to save the crew.

On 21st, Fl.B. 584 arrives at Constanța. That reinforcement for 12. Seenotflotille came via the Danube. At Sulina, it meets Fl.B. 433 which guides it to its future base of operations.

On 22nd, a Do 24 comes to rescue the crew of a german KFK sunk by mine. A R-Boot came first and picked the sailors. The following day, UJ 307 and UJ 2306 are lost off Varna (always victims of soviet mines). That time no plane of 8. Seenot is requested.

Fl.B. 424 heavily damaged on 19th February must leave to Regensburg. On 24th, SK 19 still at Carmen-Sylva is disbanded. The strength of the sea rescue units is reduced and the men are parted in other units.

July '44

On 5th, Fl.B. 424 is taken in tow by Fl.B. 584 from Constanța to Sulina. Then, Fl.B. 424 will go to Budapest or Klosterneuburg nearer than Regensburg.

As Carmen-Sylva is well equipped in transmissions, HQ of SBK XII moves there on 7th July.

On 21st, He 114 N° 27 crashes near Valcov. The two crewmen are wounded and the following day a Do 24 goes to the crash site with a medic to come back with the two flyers to Constanța.

On 24th, one month after disappearance of SK 19, SK 18 is itself disbanded and its men dispersed in various units in the area.

August '44

On 1st of the month, Fl.B. 426 moves from Constanța to Sulina (perhaps after the many sinkings of vessels on soviet mines).

On 3rd, a He 111 heavily loaded crashes in the sea. Two Do 24s start but can see that the ten men (crew and passengers) are picked up by a UJ.

In the evening of 8th, around 21.00 H., a soviet plane is shot down by a german night fighter (perhaps of IV./NJG 6). A parachute is seen. Two Fl.B.s sent to the spot must come back, the soviet flyer falling in a mine field. More luck for a crew of a german night fighter (the same who shot down the soviet plane?). Suffering an engine problem the aircraft must be abandoned and a Do 24 will rescue the crew of three (that plane must be Bf 110 G-4 WNr 480180 of IV./NSG6 reported lost in the marshy grounds of the Danube Delta). The following day, a Do 24 starts to find the missing soviet flyer and cannot spot anything.

On 10th, soviet planes strafe a R-Boot killing five sailors and wounding thirty other ones. Five wounded are rescued and brought to Tulcea to be operated.

The 18th, Sulina is attacked by soviet planes and, again, Fl.B. 426 brings four men wounded to Tulcea. The following day, another air attack destroys the german MTBs S-26 and S-40 while S-72 is heavily damaged.

All those attacks are the signs of the beginning of a great offensive. Indeed, on Sunday 20th August, two soviet Fronts (Marshalls TOBULKIN and MALINOWSKI) attack the german-romanian lines in the bulge of Jassy. The advance of the soviet troops is quick and the defenders are surprised by the strength of the assault. That day, sixty-two bombers and eighty fighters and ground attack aircrafts come to attack the harbour of Constanța. The flak is surprised by the dropping of smoke bombs and many ships (german U-Boot U-9, MTBs S-42, S-52, S-131, romanian torpedo boat Năluca, and so on...) are destroyed. Other vessels (german U-18 and 24, romanian destroyers Regele Ferdinand and Mărășești, minelayer Dacia,...) are damaged. 12. Seenotflotille loses Fl.B. 408, 415 and 433. Fl.B. 404 and 584 are heavily damaged. The unit suffers five casualties and eleven men wounded.

The following day, two Do 24s (WNr 1031 and 3331) are called to rescue two BV 138s which landed on the sea. The two crew of four are saved but both planes are lost. Lt. Wolf von ZWOROWSKI of 1./125 is one of those flyers. He remembers: *"That day (21st August), I started around 5.00 H. with two other machines to patrol in a sea rescue mission (the preceding day, the plane of Lt KOCH did not come back). I always could see the backboard plane but, on the return way, I lost it from my sight. Later I think that I recognize it. I then see many black points*

around it: that plane is attacked by soviet fighters! Wanting to help the crew, I fly in that direction. I discover then the truth! It is not a BV 138 but a Catalina used by the

Soviets as sea rescue plane. It is with six fighters and I understand that they wait for escorting a bomber formation coming to attack Constanța”.

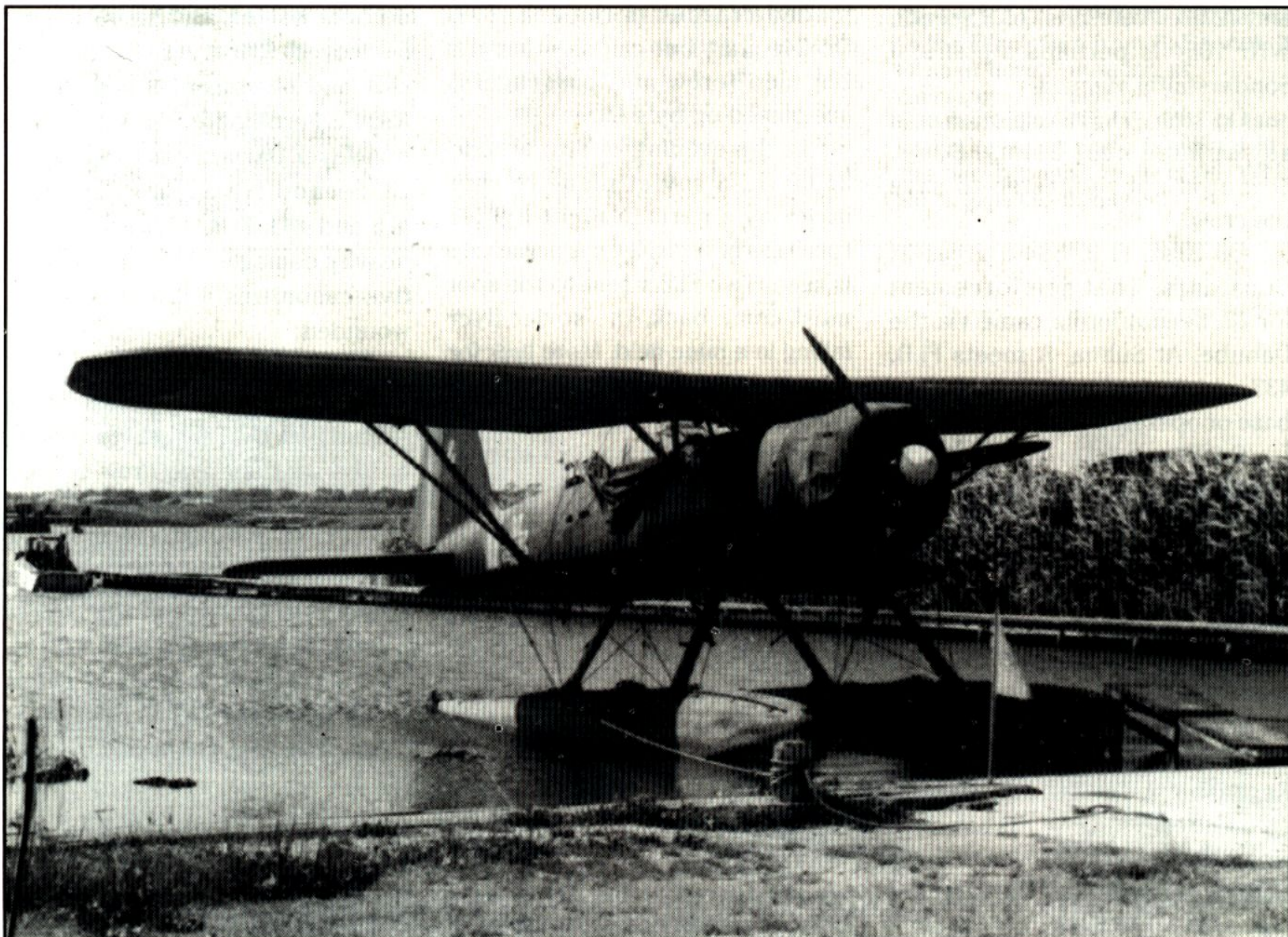
The fighters spot very quickly the lone BV 138. The Catalina itself shoots but is driven off by the defensive fire. A soviet fighter is presumed shot down. The BV 138 is no match against the soviet forces and two flyers (including Lt von ZWOROWSKI) are wounded. The flying boat lands on the Black Sea and is strafed a short time. The soviet fighters then leave. The destroyed dinghy can-

not be used and the crewman must spring in the water with only their mae west. After many terrible hours, the four men see endly a Do 24 escorted by two romanian Bf 109s (perhaps of Escadrila 52, Mamaia). They are picked up and come back. The four men could have a leave but they refuse. Indeed all soldiers are needed... On 22nd, Jassy falls in the soviet hands and, in the evening of 23rd August '44, King Mihai arrests his prime minister, Marshall Ion ANTONESCU, a true ally of the Axis cause... It is the beginning of the end...



The Capitan Vladimir STÂNGACIU (mechanical engineer) photographed in April 1944. He was the first Romanian to fly over North Pole in 1966. He ended his career as general manager of TAROM, the romanian airlines. (Vladimir STÂNGACIU).

He-114 N° 4 lost on 23rd April 1944



The flying boats Dornier 24 in the Black Sea (April 44 - 23 August 22)

1) 8. Seenot

CM+IC (WNr. 37). Destroyed on 28 April '44.
 CM+IQ (WNr. 51). Mentionned on 10 May '44. Ex - 8. Seenot plane coming back to the unit.
 CM+IZ (WNr. 60). Left on 17 June '44 to 9. Seenot.
 VH+SL (WNr. 72). Left on 17 June '44 to 9. Seenot.
 ? (WNr. 1031).
 ? (WNr. 1063). First mentionned in August '44. Left on 19 June '44 to 9. Seenot.
 ? (WNr. 1064). First mentionned in April '44. Left on 19 June '44 to 9. Seenot.
 ? (WNr. 1074). First mentionned in April '44. Destroyed by bombs on 8 May '44.
 (Nr. 1064 and 1074 were perhaps replacement planes after the losses of Nr 81 and 3266).
 ? (WNr. 3331). First mentionned mid-August '44.

At the end of the operations in the Black Sea area, 8. Seenot has around four Do 24s.

2) Sonderstaffel Mamaia

3. Seenot:

WNr. 1009: arrived on 17 April '44. Left to Vienna on 9 June '44
 WNr. 1006: arrived on 20 April '44. Left to Vienna on 9 June '44.

6. Seenot:

WNr. 403: arrived on 16 April '44. Fate unknown.
 WNr. 3303: arrived on 16 April '44. Sunk on 2 May '44.
 WNr. 2101: arrived on 27 April '44. Left on 9 June '44
 WNr. 90: arrived on 17 April '44. Remained in 8. Seenot on 9 June '44.

7. Seenot:

WNr. 1033: arrived on 15 April '44. Left to Athens on 28 April (exchange).
 WNr. 3268: arrived on 15 April '44. Destroyed on 8 May '44.

9. Seenot:

WNr. 3232: arrived on 16 April '44. Left on 9 June '44.
 WNr. 3262: arrived on 16 April '44. Destroyed on 18 April '44.
 WNr. 2132: arrived on 25 April '44. Destroyed on 9 May '44.

Unknown units:

WNr. 79: mentionned on 6 May '44. Left to Athens on 9 June '44. Presumed 7. Seenot.
 WNr. 2103: Left to Athens on 9 June. Presumed 7. Seenot.
 WNr. 3304: mentionned on 8 May '44. (must be 6. Seenot)
 WNr. 1004: mentionned on 8 May '44.

SOME LOCATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF SEA RECONNAISSANCE UNITS

7 April 1944:

Mamaia: 3./SAG 125 (5); Escadrila 102 (5)
 Sevastopol: 1./SAG 125 (5); 2./SAG 125 (5)

1 May 1944:

Mamaia: 2./SAG 125 (8); 3./SAG 125 (5); Escadrila 101 (4)
 Varna: 1./SAG 125 (3)

13 May 1944:

Mamaia: 2./SAG 125 (5); 3./SAG 125 (4); Escadrila 101 (4)
 Varna: 1./SAG 125 (5)

25 May 1944:

Mamaia: 2./SAG 125 (7-7); 3./SAG 125 (8-8); Escadrila 101 (11-5)
 Varna: 1./SAG 125 (6-4)

14 June 1944:

Mamaia: 3./SAG 125 (9-7); Escadrila 101 (11-7)
 Varna: 1./SAG 125 (7-6)

10 July 1944:

Mamaia: 1./SAG 125 (9-5); 3./SAG 125 (8-6); Escadrila 101 (12-7)

18 July 1944:

Mamaia: 1./SAG 125 (8-5); 3./SAG 125 (8-7); Escadrila 101 (12-8); Escadrila 102 (11-6)
 (Constantza: Stab./SAG 125; Aufkl. F. Schwarzes Meer)

14 July 1944:

Mamaia: 1./SAG 125 (8-6); 3./SAG 125 (8-7); Escadrila 101 (12-6); Escadrila 102 (11-6)

CHAPTER VIII: THE END (24th August 1944)

The "betrayal" of the romanian government in such a critical situation seems to surprise the men of Seefliegerführer Schwarzes Meer. Following a report written by IV.Fl.K. in the beginning of 1945, in the evening of 23rd August 1944, the first orders given are to protect men and military installations from attacks of soviet paratroopers or romanian sabotage actions. The fear of a soviet landing is great. In the night, romanian and german reports mention the presence of an ennemy fleet in the vicinity. The planes sent to the spot find only german vessels... In the morning of 24th August, Vizeadmiral Helmuth BRINKMANN (Admiral Schwarzes Meer) meets in Constanța the Seefliegerführer, Oberst SCHALKE. He mentions HITLER's order to take the control of all the city. But, BRINKMANN himself is rather dubious about that project. In Bucharest, General GERSTEN-

BERG received the order to capture the romanian capital and BRINKMANN does not want to do the same on the banks of the Black Sea. The situation is confuse. There is no more contacts with the staff of "Kommandant Dobrudscha", the General Eckart von TSCHAMMER und OSTEN who is somewhere West of the Danube. The Kampfkommandant, Oberst von OERTZEN, waits for orders (which will never come!). The wireless communications with L.Ko. 4 and Gen. Kdo. I Fl. Korps are broken around midday and nobody knows exactly what to do. In the Constanța area is stationed a romanian infantry division (the 9th) under a very skilled commandement. The Germans do not want to fight against those soldiers, their ex-allies... SBK XII did not wait too much. In the evening of 23rd, a new move begins. A part of the unit goes the following day to Buzău. In the evening of 24th, all the valuable

material (mainly of transmission) is loaded and evacuated.

In the early hours of 25th August, the Germans learn (via romanian informations) that the soviet troops crossed the Danube near Tulcea. Later, it will be discovered that crossing was untrue and one will suspect the Romanians to have created that rumour to accelerate the german retreat to Bulgaria... So, at 8.25 H, SBK 12 receives the order to send the planes from Mamaia-Siutghiol to Varna. At 9.45 H, SBK XII must leave romanian soil as soon as possible. When the last Do 24 and BV 138 take off to the South, the vehicles are prepared and, around 14.00 H, the first column starts to Bulgaria.

If the remaining vessels of 12. Seenotflotille are given to the bulgarian navy, the planes of 8. Seenot will be parted. Three of them are sent back to Germany. Alfons REMMELBERGER, a member of Lt. Willi TÖLLE's crew, flies



The Lt Johann ZWARTE is killed with all his crew on 17 Oct. 44 at Volos. His Do 24 (Wnr 51) came in 1942 in the Black Sea (Heinz BLIEFERT).

On the way to Germany. Some survivors of 8./7. Seenot coming from Greece have some rest in Vienna (Donauhafen). From l. to r.: ?, Uffz. RÖDER. Lt Heinz BLIEFERT, Lt KESSEL, ?, ?, (Heinz BLIEFERT).



then to Bug am Rügen. After some adventures, REMMELBERGER becomes a member of a Seenot unit in Norway, flying his last rescue mission... on 8th May 1945! But the main part of 8. Seenot flies to Athens to reinforce 7. Seenot. The crew will operate in the Aegean under the growing pressure of the british RAF trying to hinder the supply or the evacuation of the islands garrisons. On 1st July 1944, Do 24 J9+AA was already strafed at Leros island. Fw. Lutz GOSEPATH wounded will lose a finger and, repatriated in Germany, will never fly again In the difficult retreat of September - October 44, some survivors of the Black Sea are lost: Do 24 CM+IQ (WNR 51) which came in May 42 is missing on 17 October 44 in Northern Greece; 1M+RR (WNR 3331) which came end of April 44 is destroyed on 26 September 44...

Via Vienna, the survivors of 7. Seenot come back in Germany end of October 44. Around four Dornier 24s land on the Chiem lake (south of Munich). In November, they will be surprised by allied fighter-bombers and destroyed without having a chance to escape... A sad end for such a gallant unit... The men will be dispersed in various units (Lt Heinz BLIEFERT, for instance, will be in the Eisenbahnflak, the railroad A.A. units). At the end of the war, many ex-members of 8. Seenot and SBK XII will be captured in the West, avoiding the feared soviet captivity.



Two views of the strafed Do 24s at Chieming on the Chiemsee.
The real end of 8. Seenot... (via Gerhard HUTH).



CHAPTER IX: THE ROMANIANS ALONE

The 23rd August was a real disaster for those "elite" units of the romanian Air Force. At that time the units had thirty He 114 seaplanes (twenty afloat, one in the assembling hall and nine more still in crates, as they came from Germany), two school biplace seaplanes He 42, five motorboats (two for crews transport, three for manoeuvring the seaplanes), two Ford buses for personnel and a well equipped truck park for goods or fuel transport. They had even horses, in case the fuel will not be available.

On August 24th the Germans began to evacuate. Those who left on the 23rd evening and 24th by air escaped, but many leaving later in vehicles were captured by romanian soldiers in Constața.

On August 27th a soviet general came aboard a MBR-2 seaplane. He was received by the romanian C.O. cpt.cdr. Gheorghe BORCESCU. They entered the HQ and the general ordered the evacuation of the base by the romanian personnel as the soviet crews were expected to come. Next day, all were compelled to give their weapons. (Even in 1979

!!! some of them will be invited by the romanian police to write reports about the fate of their guns and rifles to be compared with their previous statements !!!)

Beginning of September found the romanian Flotila searching for a new provisional base. The crewmen went to Hîrșova, then to Calarași but could not find there minimum conditions for the seaplanes or for the men.

On september 4th they endly moved the twenty-two available seaplanes to Ovidiu island, near Constanța.

1952. In Mamaia, before a He-114. From left to right.
1st row: Lt. major Nichifor BOANȚĂ, Cpt. Dumitru PANAIT - observer, Lt. VOINEAG - politic commissar
back row: Lt. Radu CULCER, Lt. Octavian CÂRGIOG - observer, Lt. Nicolae TOMA - pilot, Lt. Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Lt. O, Lt. Cornel DĂNULESCU - pilot, Maior Ion MORARIU - commander (1950-1953).
Notice that part of the crewmen has still wartime equipment. (Ion MORARIU)



Same day, the other members of the personnel went to Bucharest with materials, using the buses. There they were supplied and put under the control of the Flotila de Aerostație. Some others were ordered to go to Ianca airbase, but they were taken prisoners by the soviet troops. In the base were left ten pilots, three masters and twenty mechanics for the nine packed He 114s. A platoon of soldiers and an interpreter waited for handing over the base. Nearly all personnel transferred to Flotila de Aerostație were sent to the front. On paper, only seven seaplanes existed. Had the Soviets discovered that they were twenty-two, they would have confiscated them. So, romanian air Command wanted to have

them all on the Snagov lake, north of Bucharest. Here, the touristic village could be used for the personnel and the seaplanes could be well anchored.

On December 7th, two patrols left Ovidiu and came to Snagov. One of the seaplanes, (pilot adj.av. Cristian COSTACHE) had to land near Alexeni due to bad weather.

On the 9th, repetition of the mission, but this time the seaplane of adj. sgt. Vasile STEJERAN turned over.

On the 14th, last transfer with no events. Finally, at Snagov were eighteen seaplanes He 114, a truck Ford Marmon, an electro-generator, one motor boat, and mechanical sets from all the other seaplanes.

On the 15th following officers were in Snagov: Lt.cdr.Dumitru TEODORESCU, adj.șef Dumitru CHEBAC, adj.maj. Cîrstea POSTELNICU, adj.maj. Ion PESAMOZA, adj.stg. Mircea TOMAN, adj.stg. Nicolae MORAR, adj.stg. Marcel DINU. C.O. was cpt.av. Nicolae TEODORESCU and second in command was Lt. Dan NICOLAESCU.

To cover and hide it, the Flotila was transferred under the orders of Flotila 2 Informatii Turda operating in northern Transylvania, a hilled area, not fitted for seaplanes.

For six months there was no activity at all. Then the crews trained only theoretically. There were no flights till the autumn of 1946. A new C.O. was appointed: Lt.cdr. Gheorghe IONESCU.

1953. Before hangars No 2 (left) and 1 (right) at Mamaia.

From left to right:

1st row: SAMOILESCU, Octavian TOFENI, Octavian CÂRCIOG, Maior Ion MORARIU - commander, ?, ?.

back row: MOLDOVAN, Dumitru CHEBAC - flying instructor, Lt. Nicolae TOMA, Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, ?, ?



In the night of 20/21 april 1947 a fire burned all remaining material (mainly food supplies) in barracks. As some members of the staff disappeared that night in the new repaired truck, suspicion arose about the accidental cause of that disaster.

In May there was a high inspection by the C.O. of romanian Air Force. He ordered the Escadrila back to Siutghiol. Flight trainings started intensively. A new C.O. came, lt.cdr. Nicolae SCHIANU.

Once back on the coast the crewmen started intensive training and recce missions.

New pilots and mechanics arrived all over the 1949-1950 period. In 1951 the C.O was sent to Bucharest, the new one being cpt.av. Ion MORARU, a young officer.

The crews trained as if a new war would begin: bombing, shooting exercises, submarine counter-measures, convoy protection. An IAR-39 and a PO-2 were received for school training and night flights.

In 1953 a new C.O. arrived, cpt. av Octavian TOFENI.

In 1954, once again the Flotila was submitted to romanian Navy Command for operational purposes. All ex-members of the Flotila were called back in Siutghiol, from other air units. But, when all went well, a drastic reduction in strength for all armed forces was ordered, and Flotila became Patrula de Hidroaviație.

In 1958 the unit had still eight seaplanes He 114, two motor boats and a Po-2. The C.O. was cpt.av. Nicolae TOMA.

In 1959 it was projected to move the unit in Mangalia, together with the Navy.

But there were new concept for the use of the naval forces in narrow waters. Fast torpedoboats, sophisticated radars, even missiles made the seaplanes obsolete in their conception. Some other accidents (as pilots deserting to Turkey), led to the final decision: on May 1st 1960, the Patrula was disbanded, some members of the personnel being pensioned and the others sent to Kogalniceanu Base.

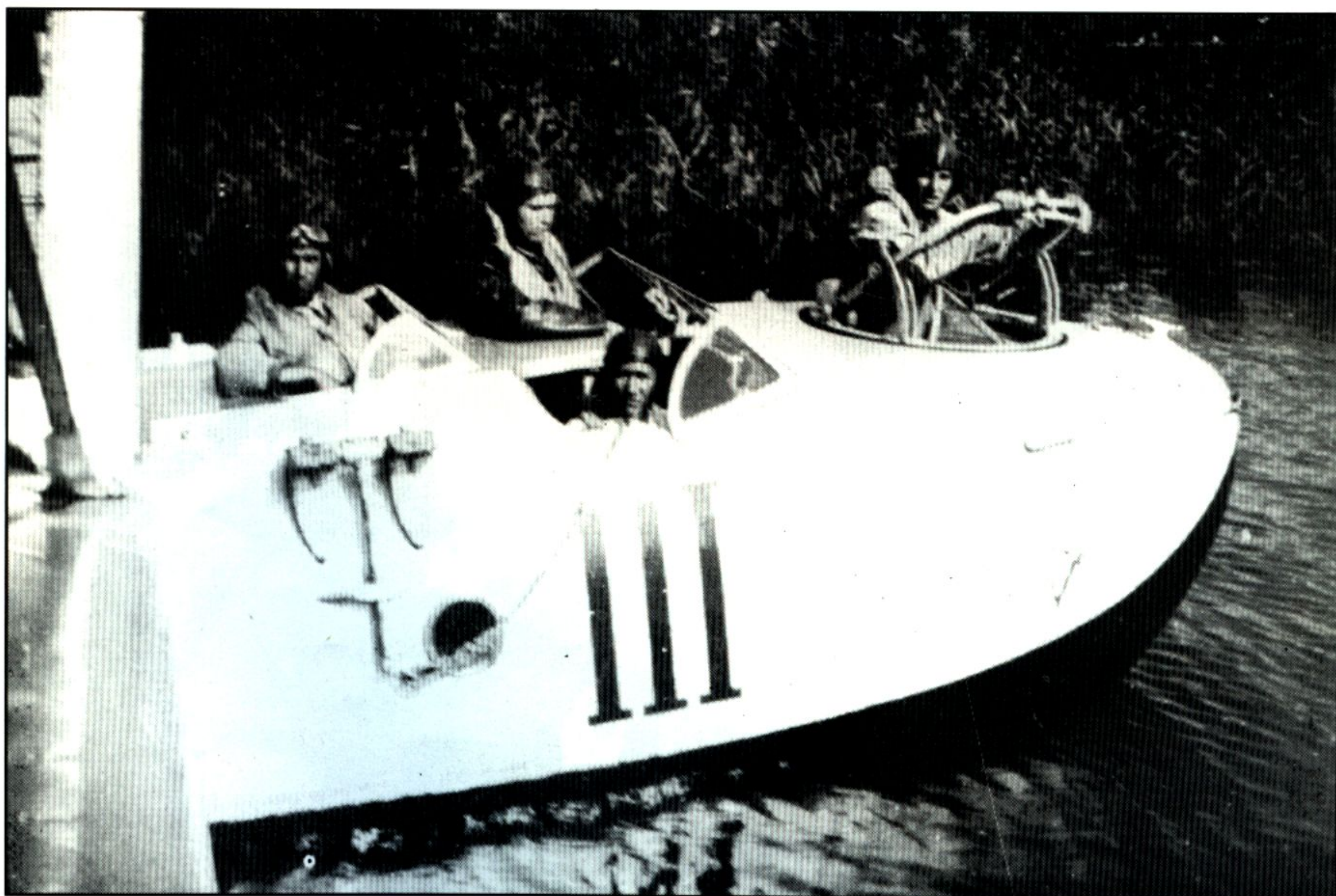
Some of the eight He 114s had less than 200 hours of flight; nevertheless they were scrapped.

The state fishing Company wanted to buy some of them for spotting the fish banks, but the military Command considered that offer as a "fishermen joke". So was the end for the romanian seaplanes unit: Hidroaviația.

APPENDIXES

- 1) Do 24s USED IN THE BLACK SEA
- 2) THE He 59s OF 8. SEENOT
- 3) THE FW 58s OF SBK XII
- 4) He 114s LOST IN THE BLACK SEA
- 5) KNOWN LOSSES OF SAG 125 IN THE BLACK SEA
- 6) THE Ar 196s OF 12.SBK
- 7) VESSELS OF 12. SEENOTFLOTILLE
- 8) EQUIVALENT RANKS (GERMAN-ROMANIAN-BRITISH)
- 9) SOVIET SEAPLANES

Savoia 62, N° 3, Siutghiol

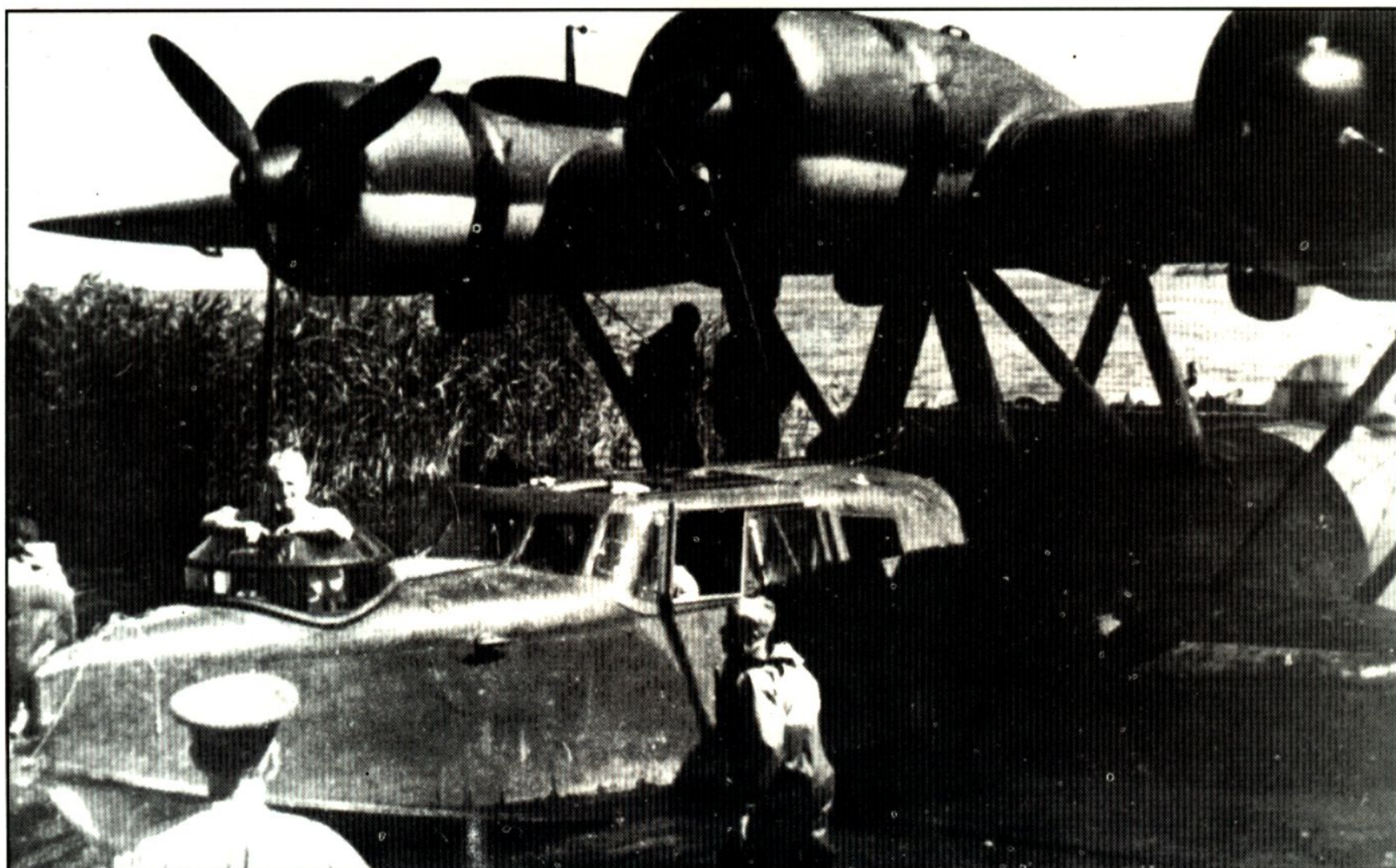


1. SOME DO 24s USED IN THE BLACK SEA

That list is naturally incomplete as we do not know all the Dorniers used in Seetransportstaffel (supply of Kuban bridgehead). Franz SELINGER supplied many informations.

- WNr 13 (?): KK+UR. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 19 August 1941
Fate: left to Athens on 20 August 1941
- WNr 17: KK+UV. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 16 August 1941 (1st Do 24 in the area)
Fate: destroyed on 3 November 41.
- WNr 20: KK+UY. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 20 September 1941
Fate: destroyed in the night 29/30 December 41
- WNr 24: KK+VC. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 9 November 41
Fate: left to Nordeney on 9 September 42
- WNr 37: CM+IC. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 6 April 42
Fate: destroyed on 28 April 44
- WNr 41: CM+IG. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 7 April 42
Fate: destroyed on 9 June 42
- WNr 42: CM+IH. 5. Seenot. Arrival: 5 March 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: left on 7 April 43 to 10. Seenot.
- WNr 51: CM+IQ. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 18 May 42
Fate: Evacuated to Athens and lost on 17 October 44 near Volos.
- WNr 55: CM+IU. 8. Seenot. Arrival: mentionned around 25 June 42
Fate: unknown (no more mentionned at the end of 43).
- WNr 56: CM+IV. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 26 July 42
Fate: left on 22 June 42 to Nordeney. Destroyed in the North Sea in 23 August 43.
- WNr 57: CM+IW. 5. Seenot. Arrival: 26 February 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: left on 7 April 43.

Coming back in Siutghiol after a mission



- WNr 60: CM+IZ. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 26 July 42
Fate: left to 9. Seenot on 17 June 44.
- WNr 64: VH+SD. 8. Seenot. Arrival: left to 6. Seenot on 27 June 43. Destroyed on 7 August 43 near Olbia.
- WNr 65: VH+SE. 4. Seenot. Arrival: 29 February 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: came back on 30 March 43.
- WNr 69: VH+SI. 5. Seenot. Arrival: 26 February 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: left on 16 April 43 to 10. Seenot.
- WNr 70: VH+SJ. 10. Seenot. Arrival: 26 February 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: came back on 4 May 43.
- WNr 72: VH+SL. 8. Seenot. Arrival: around March 43
Fate: left to 9. Seenot on 17 June 44
- WNr 79: DJ+ZE. 7. Seenot (?). Arrival: around May 44
Fate: left to Athens on 9 June 44
- WNr 80: DJ+ZF. 5. Seenot. Arrival: 26 February 43 (Seetransportst)
Fate: left on 20 June 43 to 10. Seenot.
- WNr 81: DJ+ZG. 8. Seenot. Arrival: March 43
Fate: shot down 13 March 44
- WNr 89: DJ+ZO (?). 6. Seenot. Arrival: around February 43 (Seetransportstaffel)
Fate: destroyed on 9 March 43
- WNr 90: DJ+ZP. 6. Seenot. Arrival: 17 April 44
Fate: given to 8. Seenot on 9 June 44.
- WNr 403: ? 6. Seenot. Arrival: 16 April 44
Fate: unknown.
- WNr 1006: M6+CL. 3. Seenot. Arrival: 20 April 44
Fate: left to Vienna on 9 June 44. Ended the war in Seenotgruppe (SNG) 81 in Denmark.
- WNr 1009: M6+DL. 3. Seenot. Arrival: 17 April 44
Fate: left to Vienna on 9 June 44. Ended the war in SNG 81.
- WNr 1031: KK+LA. 8. Seenot. Arrival: 31 Dec 43
Fate: unknown. Presumed evacuated to Athens.
- WNr 1033: KK+LC 7. Seenot. Arrival: 15 April 44
Fate: left to Athens on 28 April 44. Destroyed at Mikra on 19 October 44.
- WNr 1063: KK+LM 8. Seenot. Arrival: first mentioned in August 44.
Fate: unknown. Presumed evacuated to Athens.
- WNr 1064: KK+LN 8. Seenot. Arrival: first mentioned in April 44.
Fate: left to 9. Seenot on 19 June 44
- WNr 1074: IM+DZ 8. Seenot. Arrival: first mentioned in April 44
Fate: destroyed by bombs on 8 May 44
- WNr 2101: CM+RR(?) 6. Seenot. Arrival: 27 April 44
Fate: left on 9 June 44
- WNr 2103: ? Arrival: unknown.
Fate: left to Athens on 9 June 44 (7. Seenot)
- WNr 2132: KK+LW 9. Seenot. Arrival: 25 April 44
Fate: destroyed on 9 May 44.
- WNr 3232: KO+SB 9. Seenot. Arrival: 16 April 44
Fate: left on 9 June 44
- WNr 3232: CM+RB 9. Seenot. Arrival: 16 April 44
Fate: lost on 18 April 44
- WNr 3266: KO+SP 8. Seenot. Arrival: 31 December 43
Fate: shot down on 13 March 44
- WNr 3268: CM+RB 7. Seenot. Arrival: 15 April 44
Fate: destroyed on 8 May 44
- WNr 3303: Q8+HA 6. Seenot. Arrival: 16 April 44
Fate: sunk on 2 May 44
- WNr 3304: CM+RK 6. Seenot. Arrival: first mentioned on 8 May 44
Fate: went to Athens.
- WNr 3331: 1M+RR 8. Seenot. Arrival: came on 28th April 44
Fate: evacuated to Athens and destroyed in the Aegean on 26 September 44.

2) THE He 59s OF 8. SEENOT

- DA+ML: WNr 931. Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: destroyed on 10 August 41.
 - DB+KB: WNr 1823. Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: destroyed on 3 July 41
 - NV+AV: ? Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: given to IV. Fliegerkorps on 6 September 41.
 - SD+EE: WNr 2865. Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: no more mentionned after October 42. Perhaps written-off.
 - SD+ML: ? Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: prisoner of the ice at Taganrog on 18 November 41. Presumed written-off June/July 42.
 - SD+WH: ? Arrival: 9 June 41
Fate: destroyed 2 November 41
 - NE+TF: WNr 1841. Arrival: 19 August 41
Fate: destroyed 24 May 42.
 - DD+AX: WNr 1979. Arrival: 30 August 41
Fate: left the Black Sea on 4 September 41.
 - PP+AO: WNr 2794. Arrival: 21 September 41
Fate: given to a local rescue unit on 10 May 42
 - DS+KE: WNr 1981: Arrival: 17 April 42.
Fate: left on 30 July 42 to 4. Seenot.
 - ? WNr 1831. Arrival: 18 June 42
Fate: left to Germany on 14 August 42
 - TH+HM: WNr 1524. Arrival: 13 August 42
Fate: no more mentionned after October 43. Presumed written-off.
 - TH+HC: WNr 1526. Arrival: end August 42
Fate: no more mentionned after mid-April 43. Presumed written-off.
- N.B.: Franz SELINGER mentions two other He 59s which seem to be not mentionned in the SBK XII's diary:
SD+WN (WNr 2787) which came on 25 June 41;
TH+AN ? in Black Sea area in 1943.
Both fates are unknown.



**Ass. Arzt Dr. Otto
WAGENKNECHT.**
The austrian medic of 8. Seenot
is killed on 3rd July 41
with two other crewmen
of He 59 DB+KB
(family WAGENKNECHT)

**Lt. Kurt SPALTEHOLTZ, observer,
KIA as a crewman
of He 59 DA+ML**



3) The FW 58s of SBK XII

- TA+NA (WNR 2732): one of the first two FW 58s "Weihe" of the unit. Left to Paderborn on 28 June 42.
- BB+SD (WNR 58324): the second Weihe of SBK 12. Came in the Black Sea on 15 June 41. No more mentioned around July 42.
- TR+AV (WNR 3550): came on 3 July 42. Replacement for TA+NA. Left on 29 March 43.
- ? (WNR 3590): came on 18 July 42. Replacement for BB+SD. Left on 9 May 43.
- NG+HG (WNR 2043): came on 8 April 43. Replacement for TR+AV. Destroyed on 18 December 43 at Malacky (Slovakia).
- KP+AB (WNR 2): came on 8 May 43. Replacement for Nr 3590. Given on 16 June 44 to Chef San. Wesen der Luftwaffe.
- BA+BN (WNR 3597): came on 5 July 43. Destroyed on 17 January 44 after hitting the sea.
- PI+NH ? : came on 21 July 43.

Fate: unknown (presumed evacuated end of August 44).

- ? (WNR 1960): came on 22 July 43. Given on 16 June 44 to Gen. D. Fl. Ausb.

All those "Weihe" came mainly from Feldluftpark Paderborn. In 1941/1942, SBK XII had two FW 58s being used to spot the wrecks and drop rescue material. In 43/44, reinforcements were sent giving a strength of four/five "Weihe".

The officers of SBK 12 used another FW 58: PR+ND (WNR 1230?) which was perhaps of Verbindungsstaffel 4. End of August 44, that plane was in repair at Vienna.

Another transport plane was used by the SBK XII officers: W 34 CA+VM (WNR 2869). Those two planes were submitted to SBK XII from 1941 to 1944.

4) HE 114s LOST IN THE BLACK SEA

- Nr 4: 23 April 44
- Nr 5: 23 April 44
- Nr 10: 27 December 42
- Nr 11: 4 May 43
- Nr 22: 29 November 43
- Nr 25: 12 May 44
- Nr 27: 21 July 44
- Nr ? : 9 December 44



5) KNOWN LOSSES OF SAG 125 IN THE BLACK SEA

- 5 June 42: BV 138 7R+DL (WNR 0074). 3./SAG 125. Lost with three crewmen KIA.
- 4 September 42: BV 138 7R+AL (WNR 310068). 3./SAG 125. MIA with five crewmen
- 2 July 43: BV 138 7R+ML (WNR 310099). 3./SAG 125. MIA with five crewmen (including Staffelkapitän, Oblt Walter LEITERITZ)
- 3 July 43: BV 138 ? (WNR 310069). 1./SAG 125. Destroyed by bombs when moored at Sevastopol. Five crewmen wounded.
Ar 196 ? (WNR 301). 1./SAG 125. Crashed near Sevastopol. Crew of two unhurt.
- 7 July 43: BV 138 7R+CLB (?) (WNR 314). 3./SAG 125. MIA with five crewmen.
- 1 August 1943: Ar 196 ? (WNR 0073). 1./SAG 125. MIA near Sevastopol with two crewmen.
- 6 October 43: BV 138 7R+HH (WNR 130110). 1./SAG 125. MIA with crew of five.
- 3 December 43: BV 138 C-1 ? (WNR 311014). 3./SAG 125. Crash when landing at Mamaia. Four crewmen KIA + one wounded.
- 19 April 44: BV 138 MIA
- 18 February 44: BV 138 ? (WNR 130180). 3./SAG 125. 30% damaged at Mamaia.
- 25 May 44: BV 138 ? Crash when landing at Mamaia. No survivor.
- 20 August 44: BV 138 ? 1./SAG 125. MIA with its crew.
- 21 August 44: two BV 138s of 1./SAG 125. Crewmen rescued by 8. Seenot.

6) THE Ar 196s OF XII. SBK

Those planes came in 41 lent by SAG 126 (based in Aegean).

- CK+FB (WNR 0087): Arrival: 23 July 41
Fate: left the area on 15 September 41 (to Travemünde)
- CK+FF (WNR 0091): Arrival: 1 October 41
Fate: unknown but must have left Black Sea area around February 42 (included in 2./SAG 125).
- CK+FI (WNR 0094): Arrival: 23 July 41
Fate: destroyed on 21 August 41.
- CK+FJ (WNR 0095): Arrival: 1 October 41
Fate: as 0091.
- CK+FL (WNR 0097): Arrival: 23 July 41
Fate: left to Travemünde on 22 October 41.

7) VESSELS OF 12. SEENOTFLOTILLE

- Fl.B. 301: Arrival: 16 July 41 (from Swinemünde ?)
Fate: perhaps written off at the end of June 42.
- Fl.B. 404: Arrival: from Germany on 30 June 42
Fate: damaged on 20 August 44. Evacuated to Varna and given to the Bulgarian Navy.
- Fl.B. 408: Arrival: 30 June 42 from Germany
Fate: destroyed on 20 August 44.
- Fl.B. 415: as Fl.B. 408
- Fl.B. 424: Arrival: 8 Jan 44 via the Danube
Fate: left on 5 July 44 to Belgrade.
- Fl.B. 426: Arrival: 11 July 41 (1st Seenot vessel of the unit)
Fate: evacuated to Varna and given to the Bulgarian Navy.
- Fl.B. 433: Arrival: 8 Jan 44 via the Danube
Fate: destroyed on 20 August 44.
- Fl.B. 584: Arrival: 21 June 44
Fate: as Fl.B. 404

Two Rettungsbooten were lent a time to 12. Seenotflotille:

- KRD 410 "Ferdinand Laeisz": came on 15 June 42 at Feodosia. Left on 23 October 43 to the Med. Sunk in 44.
- KRD 429 "Heinrich Tjarks": came on 10 August 42 at Sebastopol. Left on 23 October 43 to the Med. Lost on 6 October 44 at Phaleron.



German sea rescue vessels in Constanța harbour



8) EQUIVALENT RANKS

GERMAN

Flieger (Flg)
 Gefreiter (Gefr.)
 Hauptgefreiter
 Obergefreiter (Ogfr.)
 Unterfeldwebel (Ufw.)
 Feldwebel (Fw.)
 Hauptfeldwebel
 Oberfeldwebel (Ofw.)
 Leutnant (Lt)
 Oberleutnant (ObLt)
 Hauptmann (Hptm)
 Major
 Oberstleutnant (Obstlt)
 Oberst (Ob.)s
 General
 General Major (Gen. Maj.)
 Generalleutnant (Gen. Lt.)
 General der Flieger (Gen.d.Fl.)
 Generaloberst (Gen. Ob.)

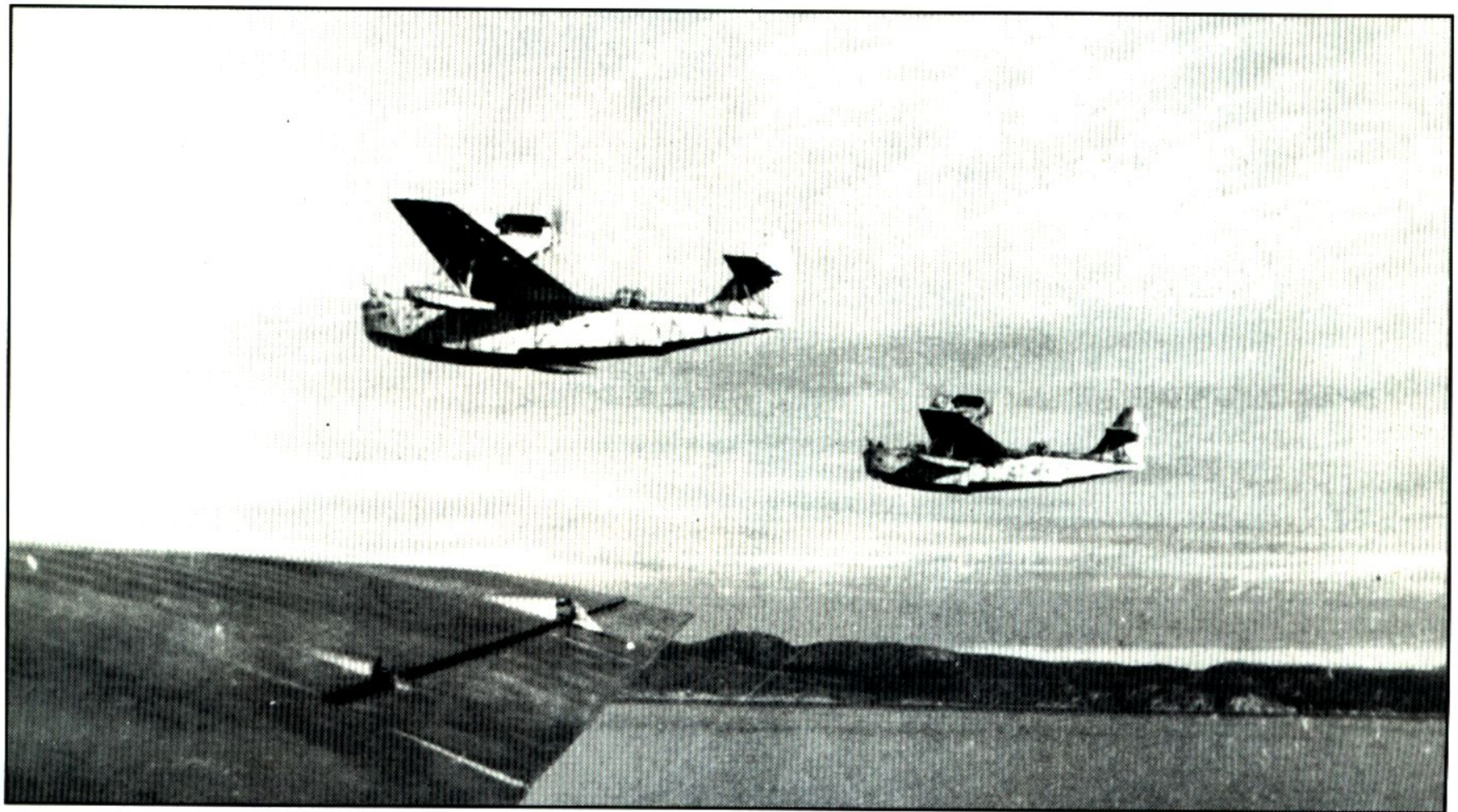
ROMANIAN

Aviator
 Fruntaş
 Caporal
 Sergent
 Sergent-major
 Plutonier
 Plutonier major
 Plutonier adjutant
 Sublocotenent Locot
 Locotenent Locotenent
 Căpitan
 Maior
 Locotenent- colonel
 Colonel
 General
 General de flotilă aeriană
 General de divizie aeriană
 General de corp aerian
 General comandant de armată



The sophisticated camouflage of that romanian Cant 501 Z was designed to imitate the waves shining in the sun (seen from upwards).

9) SOVIET SEAPLANES



A patrol of three MBR-2s flies along the Crimean coast, near Sevastopol. (Gh. PETROV)

A camouflaged MBR-2: light grey with long green patches. (Gh. PETROV)



The crewmen of the soviet seaplanes wore the same flying suits as their opponents. (Gh. PETROV)

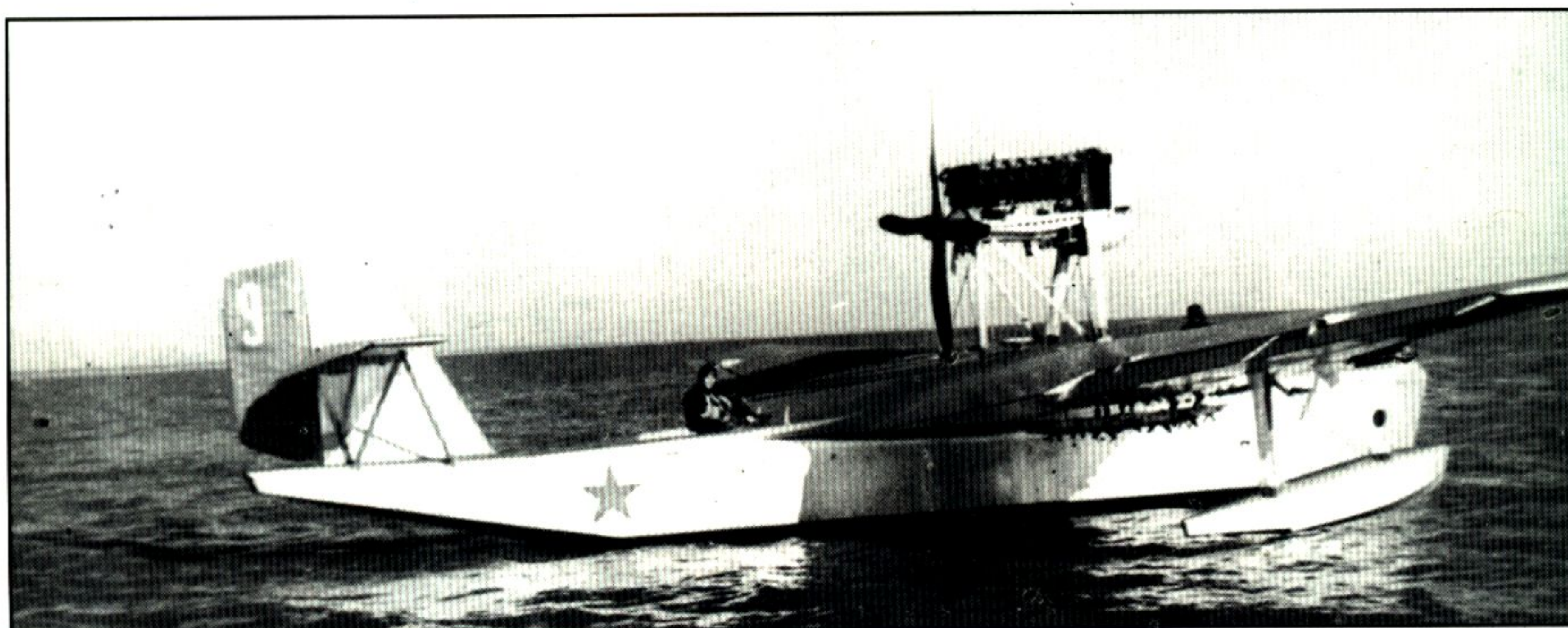




The Beriev KOR-1 was used for short range recce missions (A. BATAEV)

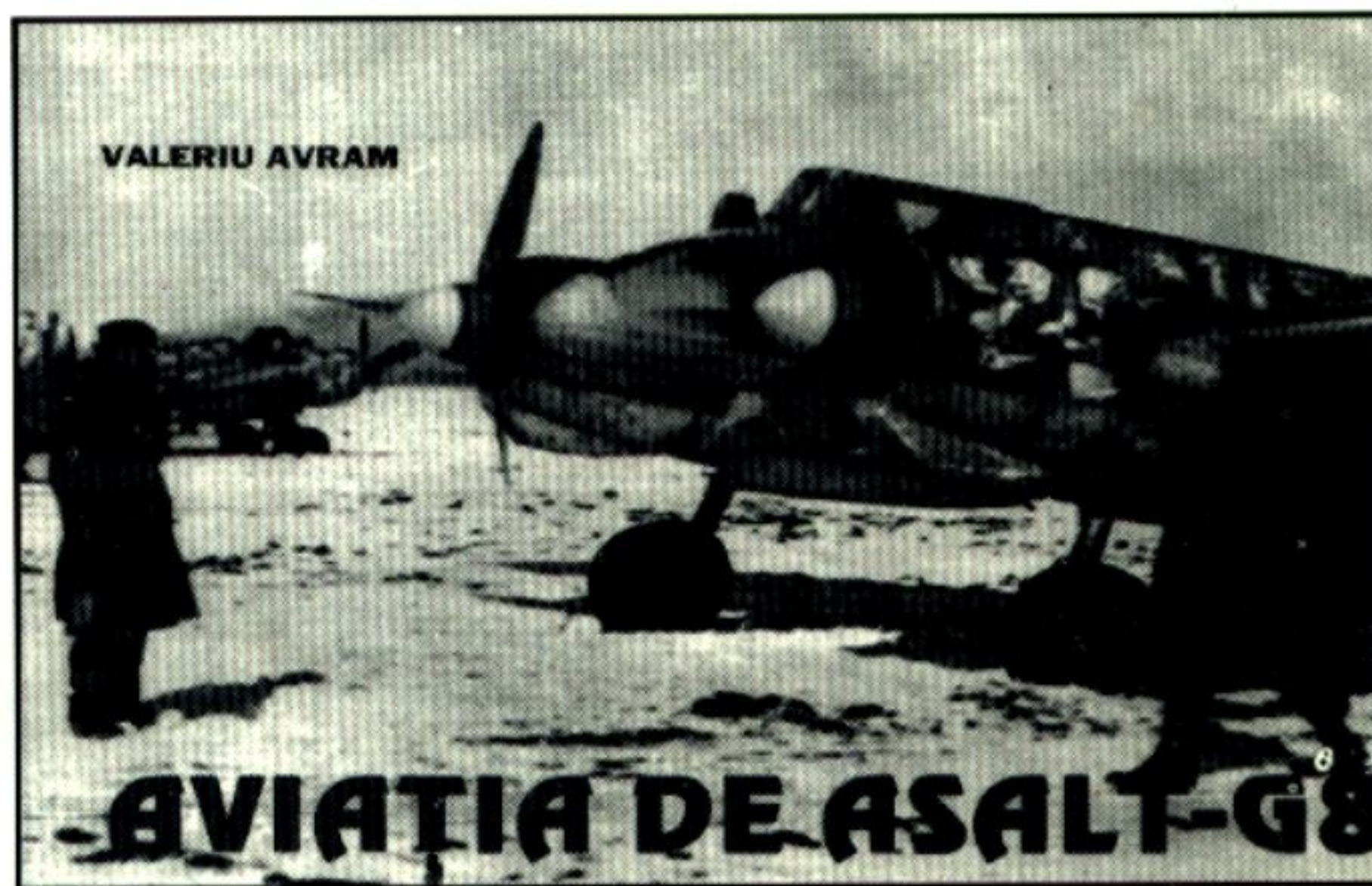


KBF in winter 1944. (Gh. PETROV)



Uncamouflaged MBR-2 before Barbarossa. (Gh. PETROV)

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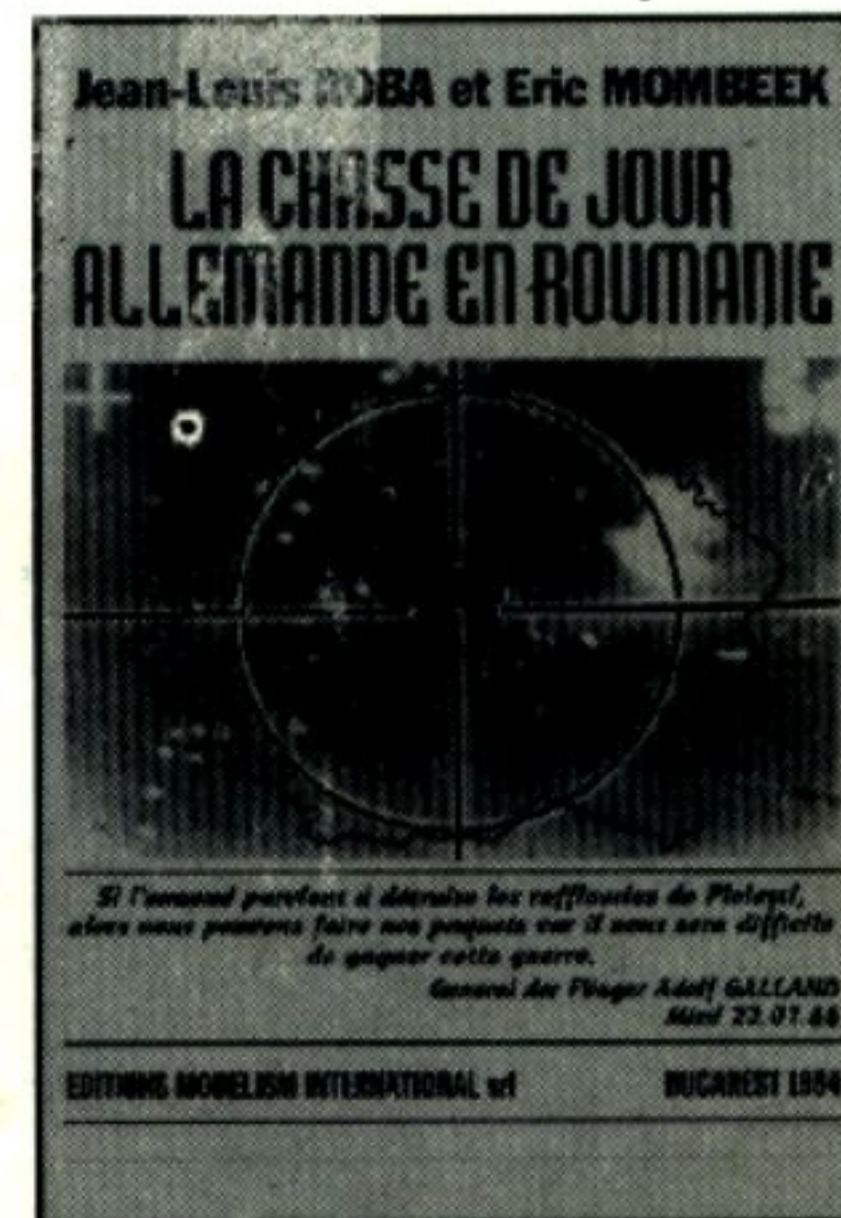
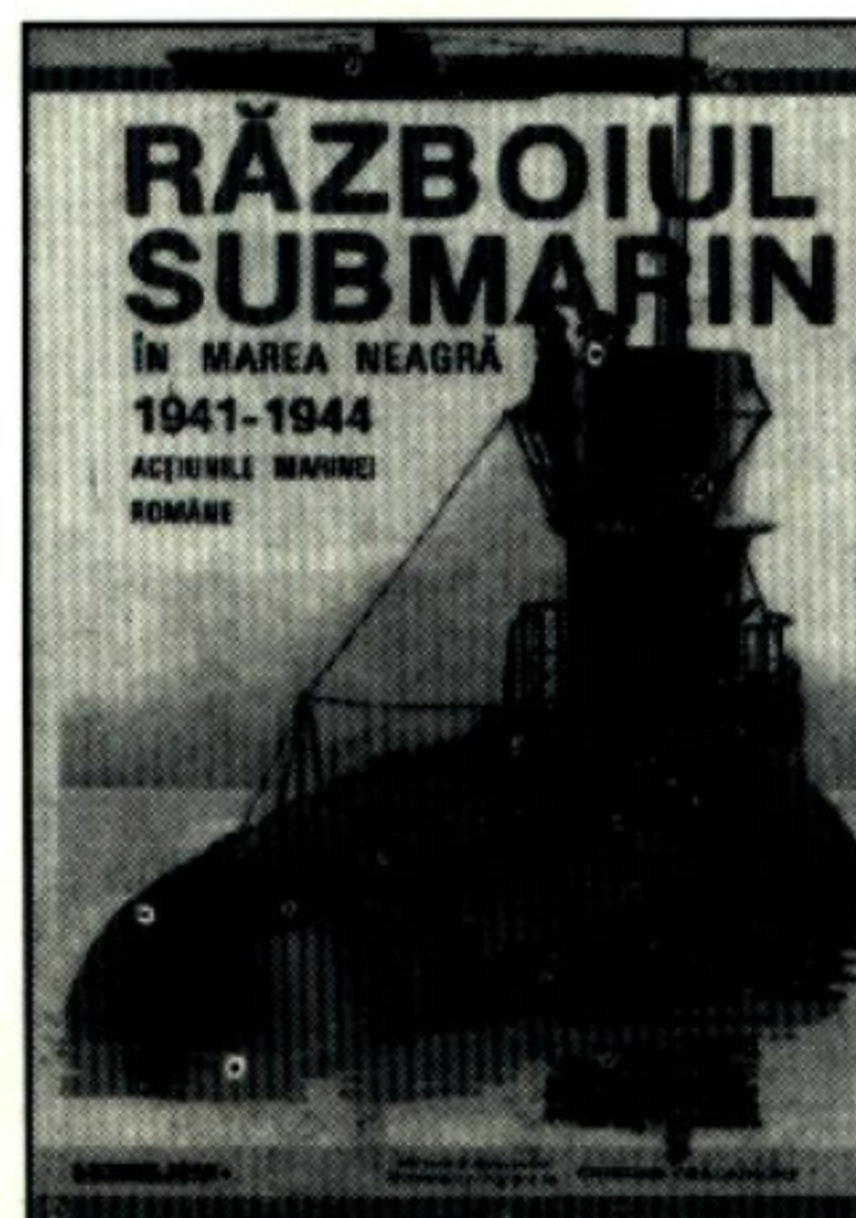
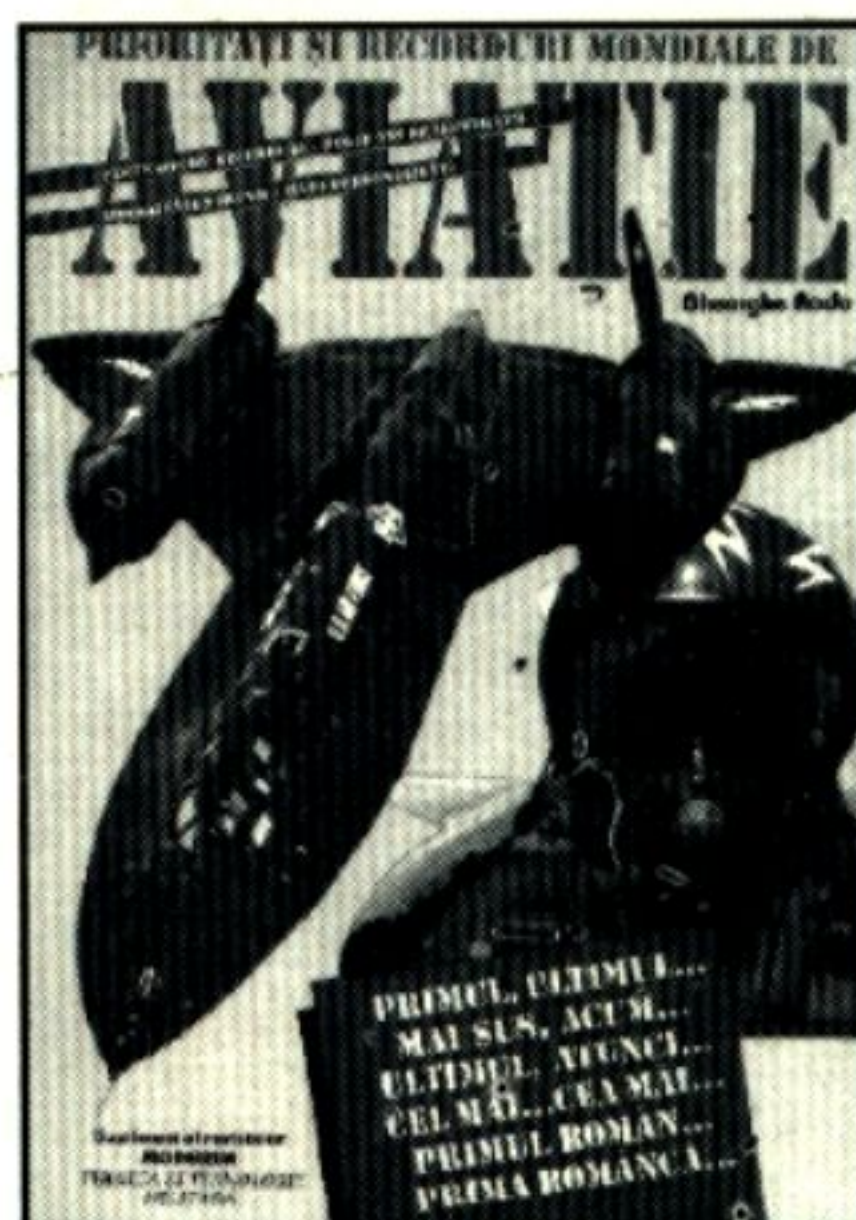
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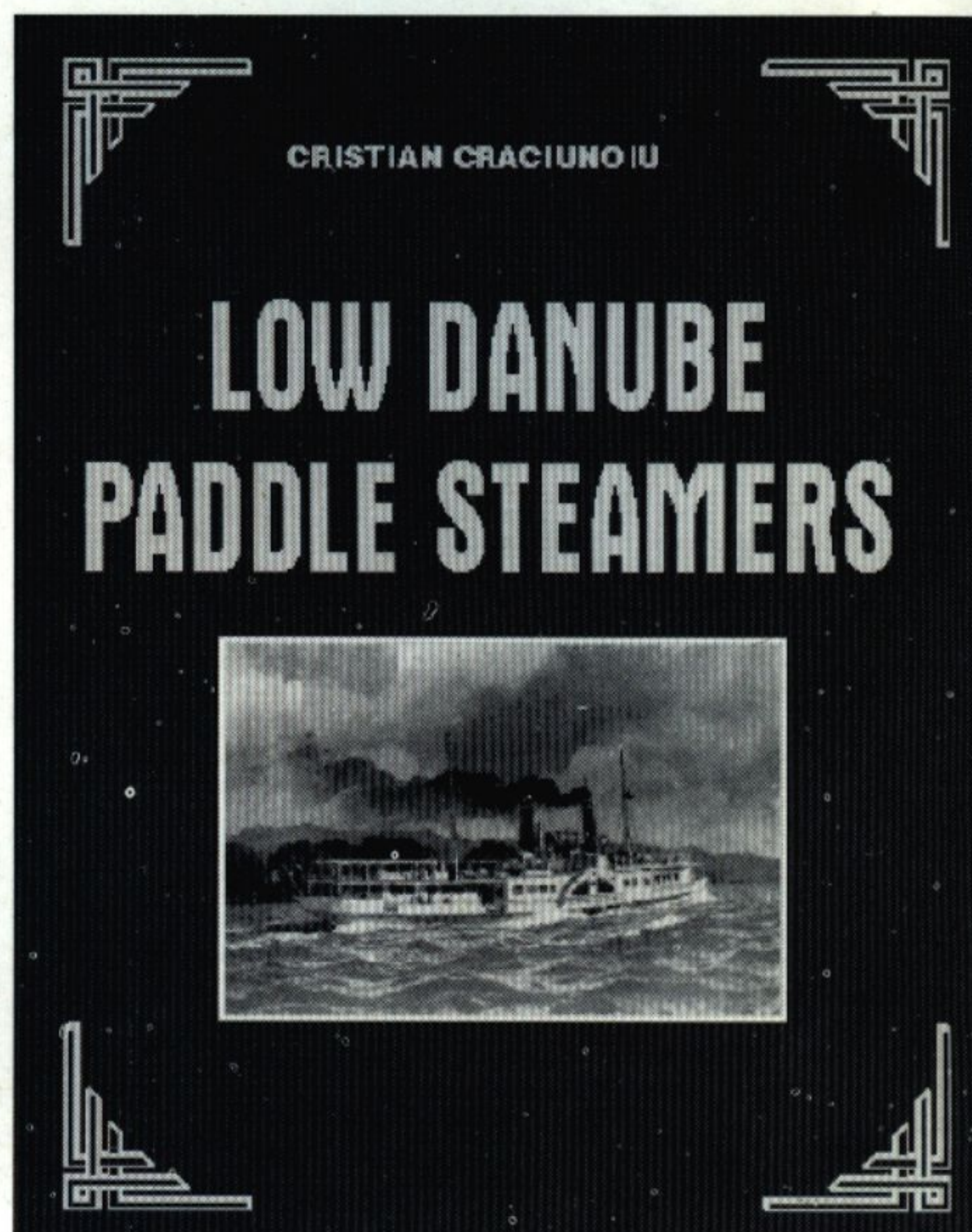
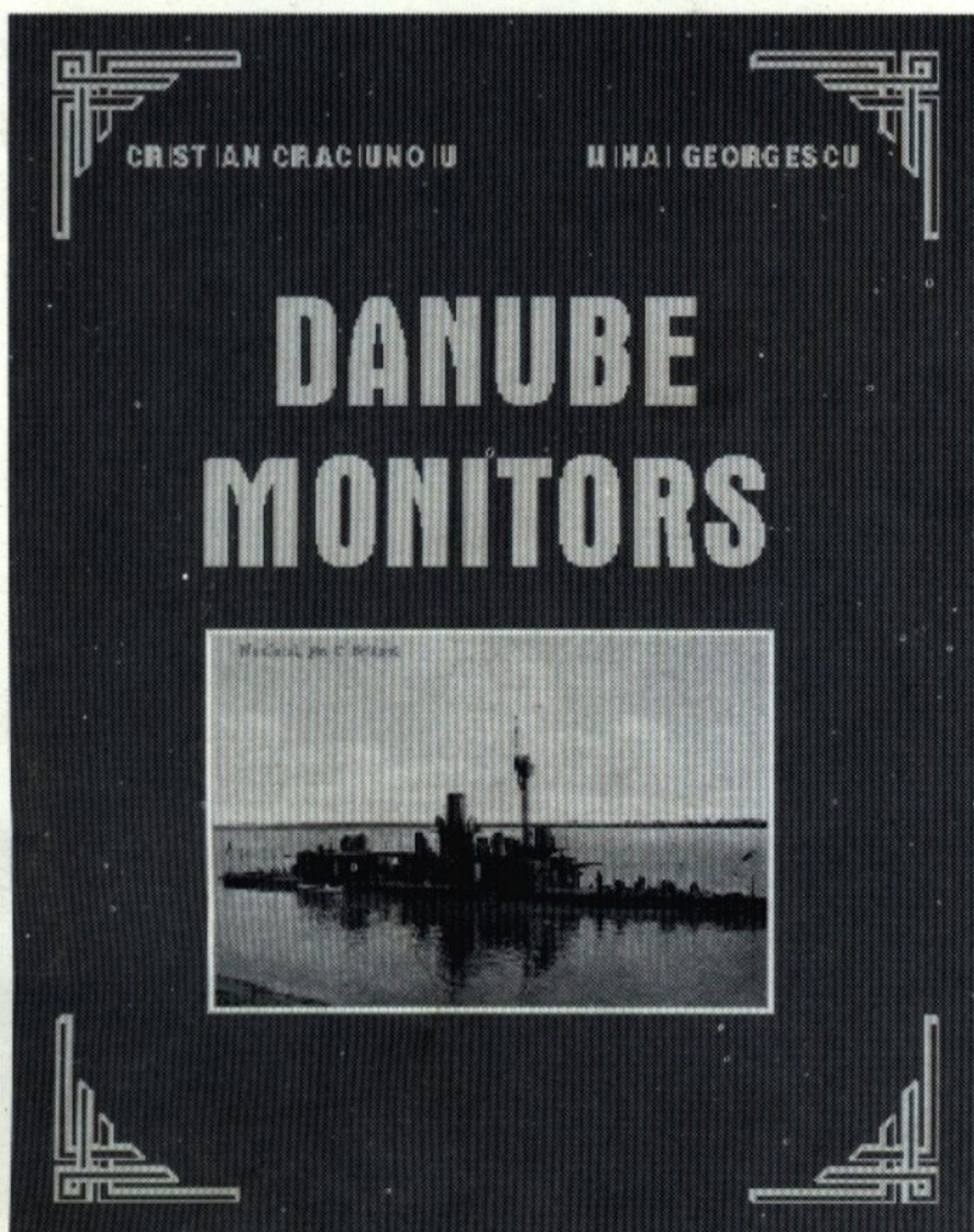
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