

**GAMBLERS  
ON THE  
TURKISH  
BRINK**

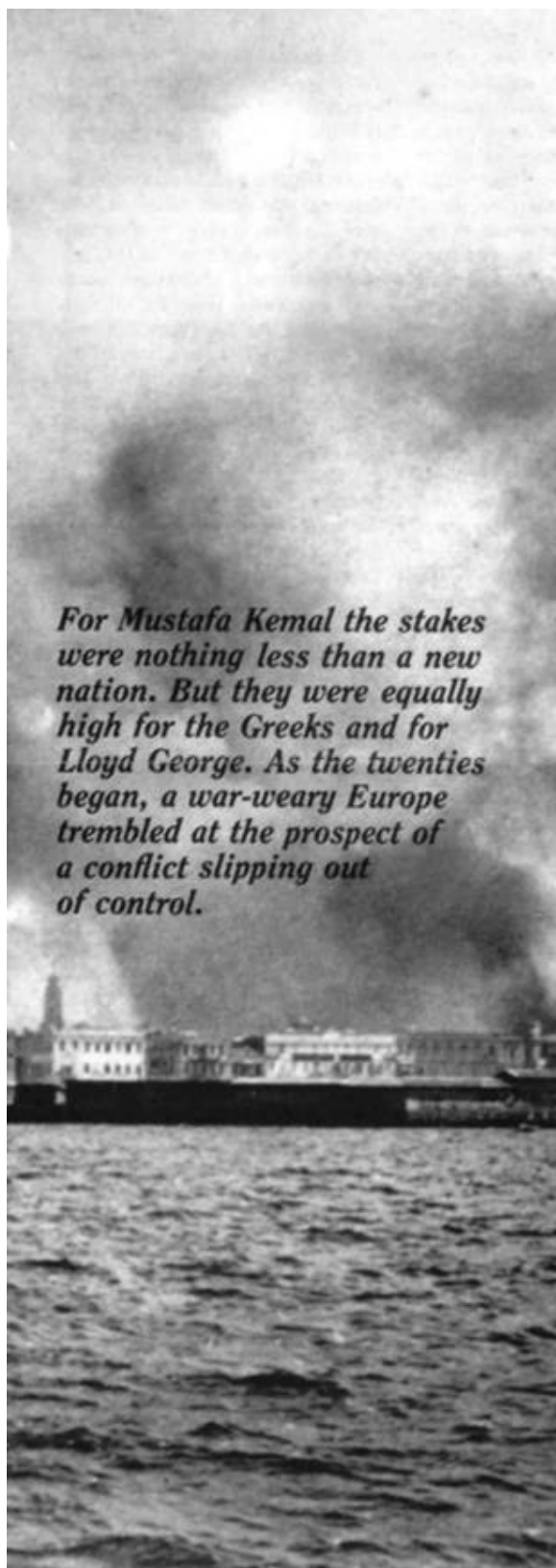


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*For Mustafa Kemal the stakes were nothing less than a new nation. But they were equally high for the Greeks and for Lloyd George. As the twenties began, a war-weary Europe trembled at the prospect of a conflict slipping out of control.*

*In September 1922, more than three years after Greek soldiers occupied western Anatolia, the Turks recaptured the port of Smyrna, long an outpost of Hellenism. Retributive violence and xenophobic zeal produced a conflagration that destroyed three-quarters of the city. Turkish troops are widely believed to have started the fire (though that responsibility is still a matter of dispute).*

*by David Fromkin*

As the twentieth century closes, Turkey plays an increasingly visible role on the world stage. With her large and rapidly growing population, she may join and powerfully influence the European Community. Yet in the earlier part of the century, it was an open question whether any such country would come into existence: whether an independent Turkish nation would emerge in any part of the dying Ottoman Empire, the Muslim sultanate that had ruled the Arabic and Turkish-speaking Middle East for centuries.

Should the Turks be granted a country of their own? And if so, where? These questions were seriously considered by British prime minister David Lloyd George, whose preeminence in Allied councils with regard to such matters was due to Britain's leading role in the wartime conquest of the region—and to the fact that a million-man British army was still in place there when the armistice halted the First World War in late 1918.

Most of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire lived in Anatolia, sometimes called Asia Minor, which corresponds roughly to present-day Turkey. (The other large Turkish-speaking population in the region was ruled by the Russian Empire and also sought independence—unsuccessfully—in the years after the overthrow of the czar in 1917.) Large numbers of Greeks and Armenians lived in Anatolia, too, as did Kurds, Jews, and others. The Armenians, their historic homeland partitioned between the Ottoman sultan and the Russian czar, lost about half their population in the massacres and forced deportations of 1915. The Greeks, however, retained a strong position based around the coastal metropolis of Smyrna (now İzmir), which had been a center of ancient Greek civilization.

Lloyd George, who presided over a coalition government of Liberals and Tories, was strongly anti-Turkish and heir to the Liberal foreign-policy tradition supporting Christian Greece against the Muslim Turks. The Armenians were Christians, too, and in theory equally deserving of support, but they were in a difficult situation—out-

numbered, and wedged between hostile Turks and Russians—so he pushed onto the Americans the burden of protecting and possibly governing them, a burden later rejected by the U.S. Senate. For his own country, Lloyd George reserved the role of sponsoring claims to less perilous areas of Anatolia.

Several of the Allies asserted claims. The United States, which had not been at war with the Ottoman Empire and was technically an associated power rather than an ally, asked for nothing, and czarist Russia no longer existed; but France and, even more so, Italy and Greece harbored territorial ambitions in Anatolia, some of which wartime Britain had pledged to support.

In the spring of 1919, Italy angered the other Allies by moving unilaterally to occupy points she coveted along the Anatolian coast: first Antalya and then Marmaris. Fearing that Smyrna would be next, the other Allies deputized the nearby Greeks to occupy the city and its environs until the Allies could consider to whom Smyrna would be awarded. Although the Greek occupation was supposed to be temporary, in practice it decided the issue in favor of Greece.

The landing of the Greek forces ignited spontaneous resistance in Turkey. Ex-Ottoman soldiers took back the weapons they had laid down under the terms of the armistice. Not until the summer of 1920 did Britain and France, with a reluctant Italy in tow, reach an agreement on the peace terms to be imposed on the Ottoman Empire. By then, as War Minister Winston Churchill had warned Lloyd George all along, the large British conscript army had been demobilized and Britain had lost the troops to enforce her terms. When even the tame Ottoman sultan, living in Constantinople in the shadow of the British fleet's guns, balked at signing the crushing treaty, the Allies were obliged to ask the Greeks to send troops to the city. In exchange, the Greeks were allowed to press an offensive deep into Turkey. The many-pronged Greek offensive launched in June 1920 overwhelmed resistance to the treaty at the sultan's court.

The treaty was signed at the suburban French city of Sévres, outside Par-

is, on August 10, 1920. Designed to satisfy not only Greece and the other Allies but also the Kurdish minority and the much-martyred Armenians, it was understandably anathema to the Turks. It partitioned Asia Minor, which the Turks claimed entirely for themselves, awarding independence in the northeast to the Armenians and autonomy in the east to the Kurds, and in the west giving Smyrna and its hinterland to the Greeks to administer with the plan of incorporating it into the kingdom of Greece. The south was to be divided into French and Italian economic zones. The Straits of the Dardanelles were to be placed under an international regime, while Constantinople was to be held hostage for the good behavior of the sultan in such matters as the treatment of minorities. Even in what remained to them of Anatolia, the Turks would not have full independence; their public finances were placed under European control.

Since only Greece still had the military resources available to enforce the treaty, Sévres set the stage for a final duel between the two combatants still standing on the field of battle: the triumphant Greeks, based on the coast, and the dissident remnants of the Ottoman Turkish Army, who were gathering on the plateau of the interior.

It was to be a duel not merely of two armies but of two powerfully attractive visions: a reborn Hellenism and a new Turkish nationalism. The modern Greeks had for decades been reclaiming their past, harking back to their greatness in the ancient world. In pursuit of this vision, they took back one after another of the historic Hellenic lands from the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Classical Greece had not been a country but a collection of city-states, and its real frontier was not political but cultural—its language and civilization. The coast of Asia Minor was part of it. Settled by Greeks thousands of years ago, the coast and its offshore islands had emerged in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. as the flourishing center of Greek civilization—the land of Homer; of the philosophers Pythagoras and Thales; of Hippocrates, the father of medicine; and of Herodotus, the father of history.

Eleuthérios Venizélos, the charismatic pro-Ally Greek prime minister who returned to power toward the end of World War I, was a foremost exponent of a Hellenic renaissance in Asia Minor. With his forceful personality, he developed an almost mesmeric hold over the imaginations of American, British, and French leaders at the Paris peace conference and won them over to the Greek cause. When he fell from power soon after the Treaty of Sévres, pro-German politicians returned from exile to replace him, and the pro-German King Constantine reclaimed the throne. Together, they set out to prove they were equally capable of achieving the Hellenic dream. Unlike Venizélos, however, they could not command Allied support; their return to power thus proved a gift to their Turkish opponent, General Mustafa Kemal (better known today as Atatürk, "Father of Turks," a name he acquired in 1937).

Kemal's program for Asia Minor was largely his own brand of narrowly defined Turkish nationalism. A lean, tough, hard-living, hard-drinking officer in his late thirties, he had won fame as the victor at Gallipoli (1915) and had been the outstanding general on the Turkish side of the world war. Though he had been an early activist in the Young Turkey party that had ruled the Ottoman Empire since just before the war, he disagreed with its leaders: He thought them mistaken in bringing Turkey into the war on Germany's side; thought the empire a source of weakness rather than strength to the Turks of Anatolia; was opposed to having a state religion; and wanted Turks to become more like Europeans.

Kemal's chance had come in 1919, just after the war, when a friend in the war ministry got him an appointment from the sultan to serve as inspector general, with wide-ranging powers to go out into the anarchic countryside and restore order. Taking full advantage of his appointment, Kemal assumed command of Ottoman forces in the interior. Among the diverse groups responding to his appeal were Muslim mullahs crusading against the Greek Christians, and underground cadres of militant Young Turks who dreamed of multinational empire over much of the Middle East. In rallying behind him,



*The principal actors in the Greco-Turkish War (clockwise from top right): Mustafa Kemal (shown with his wife), David Lloyd George, and Constantine I (seated, facing the camera, with his General Staff). Greek soldiers—who, with their foes, were collectively principals as well—are shown, top left, after occupying Smyrna in 1920.*

they were obliged to set aside their own agendas and support Kemal's: the creation of a Turkish national state in a territory consisting mainly of Anatolia.

When the Allies occupied Constantinople in March 1920, Kemal declared the sultan their prisoner and the sultan's decrees therefore invalid. Escaping from Allied-occupied Constantinople, about 100 members of the Turkish Chamber of Deputies, elected in 1919, joined some 200 others elected from what they termed "resistance groups"

to form a parliament. This body created a Government of the Grand National Assembly in the provincial capital city of Angora (today called Ankara), and Kemal was elected president.

Kemal prepared the ground for the military campaign against the Greeks by adroit diplomacy aimed at detaching them from their former allies. His first move was to establish a working relationship with Soviet Russia. It took careful diplomacy, for Kemal was openly and fiercely anticommunist, but



## The Partition of Turkey



eventually Nationalist Turkey became the first country to receive Soviet military aid—weapons and supplies—on a large scale. Together the Soviet Russians and the Turkish Nationalists defeated Armenia's bid for independence and confirmed the partition of Armenia between Turkey and Russia.

Italy, angered at the pro-Greek policy of England and France, unnerved by skirmishes with the Kemalists, ideologically in sympathy with Turkish nationalism, and lured by Kemal's promises of economic concessions, was the first of the Western Allies to change sides. France, similarly motivated, was the next to shift to a pro-Turkish policy when Venizelos fell and Constantine returned to the Greek throne. Italy and France then began negotiating to supply arms and other aid to Nationalist Turkey, though whether they actually did so remains disputed.

Even Great Britain felt obliged to modify her position and join France in a limited economic blockade of Greece to protest the return of the pro-Ger-

man King Constantine, who was surrounded by such other wartime enemies of the Allies as the politician Dimitrios Gounaris. The British prime minister remained prepared to back Greece, but other members of the government felt otherwise, so Lloyd George was unable to offer Greece more than moral support.

Between the summer of 1920, when the Allies imposed the Treaty of Sevres on a prostrate Turkey, and the winter of 1921, the situation was therefore entirely transformed. Indeed the reversal was so complete and so swift that it has few if any parallels in modern history. The Allies were now officially neutral with regard to the treaty that they themselves had conceived, written, and imposed a mere six months earlier.

Would Greece, abandoned by the Allies, try anyway to singlehandedly enforce the terms of the treaty? Constantine's ministers felt they had little choice but to do so. In terms of domestic politics, it was impossible for the new Greek government to withdraw

from Asia Minor. A second option, recommended by Venizelos, was to dig in, holding the territories awarded to Greece at Sevres and adopting a defensive strategy. That, however, would have been politically unpopular and would have committed Greece to the economic strain of maintaining a substantial military presence in Asia Minor indefinitely—for Kemal showed no disposition to oblige the Greeks by descending from the Anatolian plateau anytime soon to attack them.

Constantine's government thus opted to launch a quick knockout blow against the Kemalists. Since Kemal's forces would not descend to the coastal plain, the Greeks would come up the plateau after them and pursue them into the interior with the aim of bringing them to battle. The Greeks, with roughly 120,000 troops against Kemal's approximately 30,000, were confident that they would prevail. Lloyd George encouraged them to proceed.

They launched their attack on March 23, 1921, and despite faulty staff work

This map shows the progress of the war in Turkey. In 1921, a Greek offensive swept inland, Kemal withdrawing to within 50 miles of Angora—today's Ankara. The Greeks reached the summit of the Chal Day ridge in September but could go no farther. They retreated toward Smyrna. The next year Kemal launched a counteroffensive, which reached its bloody conclusion at the ancient port. He finally faced down British forces at Chanak, across the Hellespont from Gallipoli, but not a shot was fired.

and stiff opposition succeeded in moving up along difficult ground toward the plateau. Arnold Toynbee, the historian, accompanied the Greek army as a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian*. He noted that as his vehicle moved up the rough terrain, he "began to realize on how narrow a margin the Greeks had gambled for a military decision in Anatolia, and how adverse were the circumstances under which they were playing for victory over Kemal." At the end of the week, the Greeks were repulsed by Kemal's general Ismet at the village of İnönü and retreated.

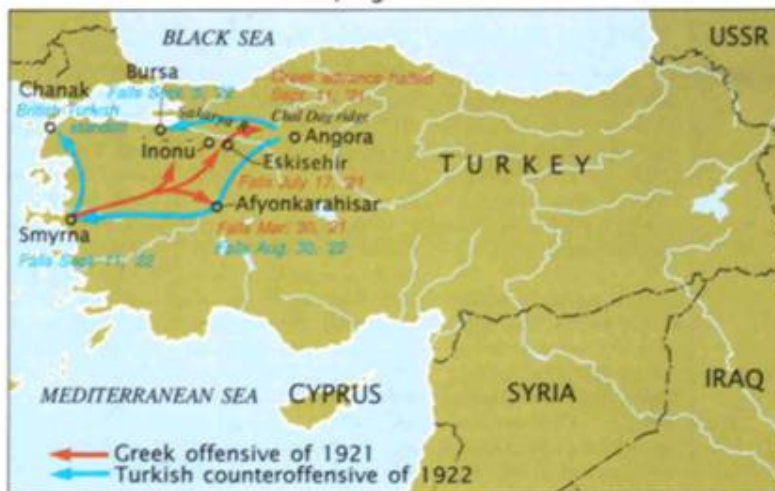
The Greek government blamed its military commanders, and on April 7 Gounaris—now prime minister—and his colleagues asked retired general Ioannis Metaxas, Greece's outstanding military figure, to lead the next offensive in Anatolia. He refused, saying the war could not be won. The Turks had developed a national feeling, Metaxas said, and would fight hard for their independence. The politicians replied that it would be politically impossible to abandon the war. Despite the risk, they felt compelled to gamble everything on the success of one last offensive, scheduled for the summer.

On June 22 the Allies sent a message to the Greek government offering mediation in the war. Greece politely refused, saying that preparations for an offensive were so far along that it would be impractical to call them off.

Constantine and Gounaris had left themselves with no option but to launch their crusade, and Lloyd George's fortunes rode with them. His secretary and mistress (whom he later married) noted in her diary that he

has had a great fight in the Cabinet to back the Greeks (not in the

## The Campaigns of 1921–22



field but morally) and he and Bal-four are the only pro-Greeks there. . . . [He] has got his way, but he is much afraid lest the Greek attack should be a failure, and he should have proved to have been wrong. He says his political reputation depends a great deal on what happens in Asia Minor. . . . [I]f the Greeks succeed the Treaty of Versailles is vindicated, and the Turkish rule is at an end. A new Greek Empire will be founded, friendly to Britain, and it will help all our interests in the East. . . .

On July 10, 1921, the Greek army launched a brilliant three-pronged attack. Greek commanders had learned from their earlier mistakes and did not repeat them. The offensive was crowned with the capture of Eskisehir, a rail junction considered to be the strategic key to western Anatolia.

Lloyd George was jubilant. Near Eskisehir, however, the Turkish commander, General Ismet, though overwhelmed by the enemy, could not bring himself to retreat. Kemal assumed the burden and personally ordered the Turkish forces to fall back.

When Kemal's people learned that he was going to abandon western Anatolia to the enemy, there was an uproar in the National Assembly; political enemies, personal rivals, and defeatists joined hands against him. After a time Kemal called the Assembly into secret

session and proposed a Roman course of action: that the delegates elect him dictator for three months; should he fail as supreme commander, the blame would fall entirely on him. The proposal appealed both to those who believed in victory and to those who were certain of defeat, and was adopted.

Employing a strategy similar to that used by the Russians against Napoleon, Kemal pulled his forces back to within fifty miles of his capital at Angora and deployed them behind a great bend in the Sakarya River. In the time available to him, he requisitioned resources from the entire population, commandeering 40 percent of household food, cloth, and leather supplies, confiscating horses, and preparing for total war. He ordered his troops to entrench in the ridges and hills that rose steeply from the near bank of the river toward Angora. By mid-August his army had dug into this powerful natural defensive position, circling Angora for sixty miles behind the loop in the Sakarya and dominating from high ground the passage of the river.

On August 14, 1921, the Greek army started the long, difficult march on Angora. The chief of the supply bureau warned that the army's extended line of communications and transportation would break down if it advanced beyond the Sakarya; but his colleagues at headquarters were not concerned since they did not intend to push much beyond that. The Greek commanders be-



## ***A Ridge Too Far: Arnold Toynbee Reports***

*The following is excerpted from a dispatch that the historian Arnold Toynbee, who was accompanying the Greek army as a journalist, sent to the Manchester Guardian in 1921 about the Anatolia campaign.*

... [B]efore the Turkish defensive on the Eski Shehir front had proved itself more than a match for the three Greek divisions attacking there, ... I became conscious of a growing tension at headquarters and of a dearth of news. The situation on the northern front was settling down from a war of movement into a war of position like that on the old western front in France, without either side possessing the resources in men and munitions of which the combatants in the European War disposed. Something must snap soon on one side or other, and I decided to get as far forward as I could before the crisis occurred. ...

I went up to corps headquarters in an empty motor ambulance. ... It was a long day's journey, for there were two steep gradients to climb, and the Greek motor transport—a legacy of equipment from the Great War—is the worse for years of campaigning on the roads of Macedonia and Anatolia. ... As we

climbed painfully up the heights ... I began to realise on how narrow a margin the Greeks had gambled for a military decision in Anatolia ... over Kemal. ...

As we approached the southern end of the defile, the guns began to be heard. That afternoon it was too late to visit the front line, and I sat there discerning nothing but the extreme tension in the air. There was an extraordinary silence, only emphasised by the occasional faint sound of artillery from the other sectors. A column of smoke began to rise sluggishly from behind the hill to our left rear (I afterwards discovered that it was the burning of Boz Oyuk, the attractive little town through which I had ridden up a few hours before). As it grew dusk, this smoke caught the reflection of the unseen fire below, and stretchers came down slowly from over the hill to our left front, where the artillery observers were standing on the sky-line. Then as the light vanished it grew suddenly very cold. I was invited into a tent and went to sleep. Evidently the battle to-day had been on the other sectors, and its issue there would decide our division's action.

Dawn was like the evening. ... I asked the chief of

staff if I might visit ... the Turkish position which the 7th Division had taken at great cost the day before I came. He pointed to the sky-line of the mountain straight in front of us, two or three kilometres away. 'There it is,' he said; 'go when and where you like,' so I started away. I will confess that I did not enjoy going off alone through the mist up that empty valley to the sky-line with the Turks behind it, though I was more afraid of sudden death from some Greek patrol, which might fire at a man not in Greek uniform without waiting to inquire whether his papers were in order. But no one took any notice of me. I caught up [to] a sapper on his way to join the divisional detachment of engineers, who were reorganising the captured Turkish positions on the hill, and we climbed up the slopes together through the mangy oak-scrub. He had been in America, and we talked alternately in English and Greek. On the top I fell in with the divisional commander of engineers, and we walked round the position together.

As the sun rose and the mist cleared away it became evident how magnificent the position was. ... From the crown of the hill a rift in the

mist suddenly revealed a corridor of plain stretching away towards Eski Shehir, with nothing between us and it except a low ridge, a mile or so off, on which a few Turks were still visible through the periscope. ... The summit which I had ascended ... must have been a terrible one to attack. All along the northern rim of the crest there was a tilted outcrop of limestone scrag, turning the slope for a few yards into a precipice, and here ... lay most of the Greek dead (the Turkish dead, killed by shell-fire, lay in their trenches).

I wondered how any one could think the military possession of those summits worth the price, and then I looked down the plain of Eski Shehir and thought of the historical consequences which the capture of those summits might involve. I had not realised yet that, even from the military point of view, they had been captured in vain.

... I made my way back downhill towards divisional headquarters but ... I thought I was merely going down to find some lunch, and that I should have time to visit [the ridge] again before the division descended ... into the plain and advanced to Eski Shehir.

lieved they had already beaten the enemy and would merely finish him off at this last stand. They invited the British liaison officers who accompanied them to attend a victory celebration in Angora after the battle.

But the nine-day march was arduous, across desert and wilderness that provided neither food nor water. In the sand and dust, motor vehicles broke down and there were persistent problems of supply. At the end of the

march, as the Greeks moved toward Angora, Turkish cavalry dashed in behind them to raid their supply lines.

The advancing Greek army made first contact with the enemy on August 23 and attacked all along the line on August 26. Crossing the river, the Greek infantry, under intense Turkish fire, fought its way slowly up toward the heights, driving the enemy from one ridgetop line of entrenchments to another above it. The fierce combat

went on for days, with the Greeks advancing about a mile a day. By September 2 they had gained control of the commanding heights, a long, broad ridge called Chal Dag.

The Greeks were poised to seize victory, and the Turks were on the verge of retreat; but both armies were too exhausted to move. A curious calm descended on the battlefield. What became clear only gradually in the days that followed was that Kemal's strategy



... When I got down to headquarters I found only officers and telephones. Tents and baggage had gone. ... I found my baggage and determined to stick to it, which let me in for an exasperating series of marches and counter-marches with the baggage train of the divisional staff up and down the defile. ... Late afternoon passed into evening, and the little town of Boz Oyuk went up in brighter and brighter flames, illuminating not only the smoke but the surrounding hills. Finally, towards 10 P.M., we got the order to pitch the tents where they had been the night before. A rumour came that there had been a great battle on the 10th Division's sector in the centre; that the 10th had repulsed all attacks, and had counter-attacked in turn; and that a Greek aeroplane had seen the Turkish forces retreating in confusion. As a matter of fact, that morning the 10th Division, holding the Greek centre, had been pushed so far back that our own retreat through the defile had been menaced for several hours, and the airmen had reported that fresh Turkish divisions were coming into line. At the moment when the staff's baggage was moving up to its old posi-

tion, a general retreat had already been decreed.

I was dozing (one could not sleep consecutively for the cold) against the outside of a tent, when some one came round and began to pull up the pegs. As I got up I found the mules already being loaded. The battery under the hill limbered up and fell into line in front of us. The cavalry mounted and followed. We moved out, but back and down the valley, passed through the streets of Boz Oyuk, where the fire was now at its height. ... It was a weird march ... in choking dust transfused with moonlight and reeking with the odour of animals and men. I did not in the least realise our danger, and I am sure that 90 per cent. of the column were as unaware of it as I.

... I must record my admiration of the discipline and good temper which the retreating division maintained from beginning to end, ... till the time when, on the second afternoon, one section after another of the interminable column passed through the wire entanglements and trenches which they had held twelve days earlier, before the offensive began, and settled down in their old quarters to hold their old line.

The men were angry—angry at spending so much blood and labour in vain. ... Certainly the quality of this veteran division came out in adversity. ... Heavy guns, field guns, mountain artillery, lorries, ox-carts, and mules—all were safely brought away, and such ammunition as could not be transported was blown up.

... There was no panic and little confusion, and yet our situation was not a comfortable one. ... Would the enemy cavalry ... cut into our flank before our journey was done? But no enemy appeared. We camped that afternoon at 2 P.M. on the Nazıf Pasha heights, between the plateau of Pazarjyk and the plain of Ainegöl. We did not leave them till 3 A.M. next morning, and it was not till we had safely passed through barred and bolted Ainegöl town, and were nearing the further heights, where we were to stand, that any Turkish cavalry made contact with our rearguard.

... That was the end of my walking. ... [A] passing motor lorry ... dropped me at the crown of the hill, just above the wire and trenches of the period before the offensive, which the division was to re-occupy again. ... I sat there watching the immense procession and look-

ing out for the mule which was carrying my knapsack—I could identify him because he was also carrying two deal folding tables belonging to the divisional staff.

As I watched, one of two oxen yoked to a cart just below me lay down deliberately in the road, and the whole file of carts, guns, and lorries halted behind him for miles. It was a dramatic act on the part of the ox, for there, far away on the road zigzagging down into the plain from Nazıf Pasha, I could see the dust raised by the Turkish cavalry as they came down at last in pursuit. In some circumstances an ox may decide the fate of an army, but the driver of this ox was more than a match for him. After kicking and prodding the animal with no result whatever, he stooped down, picked up its tail, and, to my amazement, started carefully parting the hairs. Then, assuming a ferocious expression, he dug his teeth into the tail flesh. Perhaps this was an *ultima ratio* for dealing with oxen which had been handed down in the man's family for generations. Anyhow it worked. The ox got up with alacrity and walked on, the whole column followed. ...  
—From the Anatolian front, April 5, 1921.

had succeeded: He had lured the Greeks into overextending their supply lines, which had been disrupted by his cavalry raids. For days the bone-weary, hungry, thirsty Greeks at the front had been deprived of food and ammunition; they had kept going on sheer courage. Now they could no longer go on.

It was one of those astonishing moments when the truth becomes visible. Both the tactical victory and the strategic defeat of the Greek army could be

seen at a glance: Greek troops dominated the field of battle from Chal Dag; yet their position was one in which soldiers never want to find themselves—fatigued, bereft of supplies, and deep inside enemy territory.

The Turks were exhausted, too, and down to their last supplies of ammunition; they were also badly demoralized after losing Chal Dag. Yet Kemal held off from retreating, sensing that if he could hold firm long enough, the other

side would retreat first. Neither army could go on fighting for more than a few days, so it came down to a contest of wills in which the Turks held the advantage as soon as the Greeks began to realize the peril of their position.

On September 8, after nearly a week of calm, Kemal took all of his remaining ammunition and threw it into one last attack. By September 11, unable to continue fighting, the Greek troops at the front finally received the order to



retreat. They descended from the heights that they had won with so much bloodshed and, unhindered by the Turks, crossed back over the Sakarya River, retreating to Eskisehir, where they had started their march a month before. The campaign was over.

Between the summer of 1921 and the summer of 1922, a lull prevailed in the Greco-Turkish War. During this time Kemal gathered arms and supplies to launch an attack; Greek prime minister Gounaris and his foreign minister journeyed west to seek aid from the Allies. They were met with little sympathy. In London they sat in the ambassadors' waiting room at the Foreign Office, hat in hand, hoping Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon would somehow solve their problems. They called upon the prime minister, too; but Lloyd George told them, "Personally I am a friend of Greece, but . . . all my colleagues are against me. And I cannot be of any use to you." He urged them to fight on nonetheless, in hopes that things would change for the better. In the spring of 1922 he told Venizelos, who had come to see him in the House of Commons, that when Constantine eventually disappeared from the scene, public opinion in the Allied countries would swing back toward support of Greece. "Meanwhile Greece must stick to her policy," he said.

Lloyd George found himself increasingly isolated, even within his own gov-

ernment, and the foreign secretary took effective control of efforts to resolve the crisis. In collaboration with the Allies, he sought an accommodation with Nationalist Turkey.

Fearing that the Allies were about to betray him that summer, King Constantine withdrew a vital force of three regiments and two battalions from the Greek army in Anatolia, where they had been standing guard against the Turks, and sent them to Thrace, the European province of Turkey opposite Constantinople. His government announced that Greece would occupy Constantinople in order to bring the war to an end. His desperate calculation was that this threat would impel the Allies to take some action to resolve the conflict, presumably in favor of Greece. He gambled that at the very least the Allies would let his forces in Thrace pass through Constantinople to rejoin his weakened armies defending the Asia Minor coast. But instead, the Allied army of occupation in Constantinople barred the road to the Greeks, asserting an armed neutrality. As a result, the Greek troops withdrawn from the front line in Asia Minor could not return.

Meanwhile, Constantine's withdrawal of units from the coast of Asia Minor prompted Kemal to hasten his attack on the weakened and overextended Greek defensive lines there. Secretly massing his forces, he launched an attack on the southern front at dawn on August 26. Following two days of fierce

fighting, the Greeks were forced to retreat in disorder.

Greece hastily assembled a fleet to evacuate her army. Racing the coming September rains and the advancing, vengeful Turkish army, soldiers all along the coast thronged toward the ships, traversing a countryside in which perhaps a million people had been left homeless. The ancient Greek community of Asia Minor was seized with dread. The archbishop of Smyrna wrote to Venizelos on September 7 that "Hellenism in Asia Minor, the Greek state and the entire Greek Nation are descending now to a Hell from which no power will be able to raise them up and save them. . . . It is a real question whether when Your Excellency reads this letter of mine we shall still be alive, destined as we are . . . for sacrifice and martyrdom." He ended with an appeal for help.

Appeals were in vain. Venizelos was powerless to give aid, and two days later the archbishop was sent to the martyred death he had foreseen: A mob of Muslims tortured him to death.

Since the beginning of the war, atrocities between the Muslim and Christian communities had escalated. When the Greek army first landed in Smyrna in 1919, soldiers had butchered unarmed Turks. In *The Western Question*, Arnold Toynbee reported that in visiting Greek villages destroyed by the Turks, he noticed that the houses had been burned to the ground

to the rescue of Lloyd George's policy and told the Cabinet in September,

The line of deep water separating Asia from Europe was a line of great significance, and we must make that line secure by every means within our power. If the Turks take the Gallipoli Peninsula and Constantinople, we shall have lost the whole fruits of our victory.

By mid-September 1922, the last Greek troops had been evacuated and a direct armed clash between Britain and Turkey seemed imminent. The Cabinet

met in a series of emergency sessions commencing September 15, when Churchill told his colleagues that the Allies' misfortunes were due to the fact that they had let their armies melt away. They needed armies, he said, and they also needed to secure support from the Dominions (who, after the world war, had wrung from Lloyd George a concession that in the future the question of war or peace was to be decided by each of them for herself) and from France in reinforcing the British troops facing Kemal's armies.

On September 15, the Cabinet instructed Churchill to draft, for Lloyd

George's signature, a telegram informing the Dominions of the British decision to defend the neutral zone in Turkey and asking for their military aid. Shortly before midnight the telegram, in code, was sent to each of the Dominion prime ministers.

The Cabinet also decided that the public should be informed of the seriousness of the situation, and to this end Churchill and Lloyd George prepared a press release on September 16 that appeared in that evening's newspapers. It expressed the government's desire for a peace conference with Turkey, but said none could convene under

the gun of Turkish threats. It expressed fear that if comparatively weak Muslim Turkey could be seen to have inflicted a major defeat on the Allies, the rest of the Muslim world would be encouraged to throw off colonial rule. The communiqué mentioned consultations with France, Italy, and the Dominions regarding joint military action to avert the Kemalist threat.

The belligerent tone of the statement alarmed the British public and also caused alarm abroad. Furious that the British government appeared to be speaking for him, French premier Raymond Poincaré ordered his troops withdrawn from the front line of the neutral zone; the Italians followed forthwith, leaving the British forces to face the enemy alone.

The Dominion prime ministers also were offended. The communiqué was published in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand newspapers before the prime ministers had time to decode the cables they had received, which led them to think Churchill and Lloyd George were trying to rush them into something without giving them time to think. British Dominions had never refused to follow the mother country into war, but now Canada and Australia refused to send troops, and South Africa remained silent. Only New Zealand and Newfoundland responded favorably.

On September 22, Lloyd George asked Churchill to chair a Cabinet committee to oversee military movements in Turkey. Churchill's brilliant friend F.E. Smith, now Lord Birkenhead and serving as lord chancellor, had been critical of Churchill for changing to an anti-Turkish position, but at the end of September he joined Lloyd George and Churchill as a leader of the belligerent faction. It was a question of prestige, Birkenhead felt; England must never give in to force.

The British press, however, continued its campaign against the war, and public protests were held. Labor-union delegates went to Downing Street to deliver their protest to the prime minister personally.

Lord Curzon crossed over to Paris to concert a strategy with the Allies. On September 23 he finally agreed with France and Italy on a common program that yielded to all of Kemal's de-

mands—Eastern Thrace, Constantinople, and the Straits—so long as it could appear to be a negotiated settlement rather than a surrender.

Meanwhile, the British and Turkish armies confronted each other at Chanak (today's Çanakkale), a town on the Asiatic side of the Straits from which tours now depart for the ruins of Troy. The French and Italian contingents having retired to their tents, a small English contingent stood guard behind barbed wire, with orders not to fire unless fired upon.

Once again Kemal demonstrated an ability to unnerve the other side at the psychologically right moment. The first of his troops advanced to the British line on September 23 but did not open fire; they stood their ground. A few days later more Turkish troops arrived. By the end of September, there were 4,500 in the neutral zone, talking through the barbed wire to the British and holding their rifles butt-forward to show that they would not be the first to fire. It was an eerie confrontation. On September 29, British Intelligence reported to the Cabinet that Kemal, pushed on by Soviet Russia, planned to attack the next day. The false report was believed. With the Cabinet's approval, England's military chiefs drafted a stern ultimatum for the local British commander to deliver to Kemal, threatening to open fire.

The local British commander did not deliver the ultimatum. Instead he reached an agreement with Kemal to negotiate an armistice—and so brought the crisis to an end. For many reasons—including fear of what Lloyd George and Churchill might do—Kemal accepted a formula that allowed the Allies to save face by postponing Turkey's occupation of some of the territories she was eventually to occupy.

Had Kemal invaded Europe, it would have meant war. The belligerent posture of the British leaders appeared to have stopped him. Given the actual weakness of their position, this represented a brilliant triumph for Lloyd George and Churchill. (The British electorate, however, did not see it in this light. In the flush of what he believed to be a victory, Lloyd George

decided to call a snap election—and as a result the Tories left his Coalition and brought down his government. The subsequent election was a disaster for him, and he never held office again.)

After much difficult bargaining, an armistice was worked out at the coastal town of Mudanya on the morning of October 11. It was to go into effect at midnight October 14. Significant issues were left unresolved, but consideration of them was postponed until a peace conference that concluded at Lausanne the following year. Essentially Kemal was able to obtain the terms that he had always demanded: an independent Turkish nation-state to be established in Anatolia and Eastern Thrace. Before long, Kemal's Turkey took physical possession of Constantinople, the Straits, and Eastern Thrace from the departing Allies.

In Greece and Turkey, vanquished and victor reaped the respective rewards of failure and success. A military revolt swiftly overthrew Constantine, who was sent into exile. Gounaris and other ex-ministers of the deposed monarch were court-martialed and convicted of high treason. Gounaris and five others were executed by firing squads.

Constantine and his ministers had committed no crime in the ordinary sense. They had done something worse: They had brought about a historic catastrophe for their nation. Greek influence in Asia Minor, after thousands of years of existence, had been lost forever in the autumn of 1922 by the government of King Constantine.

As Greeks departed those shores, Turks began the task of creating a new country to the design of Mustafa Kemal. Victory soon brought Kemal something close to absolute power in his domains. He abolished the sultanate, the caliphate, and the empire; brought in the Western alphabet and Western dress; imposed a secular nation-state on a population that found such notions alien; and set his people on a road intended to lead them into the European community.

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# Chapter 3



**The Turkish War of Independence [1919-1922]**

*2nci Tayyare Bölüğü lined up at Gazimir in October 1922. The line-up consists of Nieuport fighters captured at the field, Breguet 14A-2s also captured, French Breguet 14B-2s, captured DH9s and a Spad XIII. (Photo: TuAF)*

Pfalz D.III

Albatros B.I/C.III/D.III/D.Va/C.XV

DFW C.V

Rumpler C.IV/C.VII

Avro 504K

Fiat R-2

De Havilland DH9

Breguet 14 A-2/B-2

Gotha WD13

SAML/Aviatik B.1

Spad XIII

Nieuport 17/24/27

LVG C.IV/C.V

Halberstadt D.V

AEG C.IV

Fokker D.I/D.VII

After the signing of the armistice at Mudros on October 1, 1918 the victorious Allies could start their plan of breaking up the former Ottoman Empire.

Zones of "interest" went to France, Italy and Britain and larger areas were designated homelands for Armenians, Kurds and Pontian Greeks. Military forces were prohibited in the small Turkish state and only a token gendarmerie force under foreign officers was to be set up. No military aircraft were allowed and the 45 aircraft which had survived the war were stored at Maltepe south of Istanbul. The pacified Ottoman government allowed this to be implemented until a Greek Army (with British consent) landed at Izmir in Asia Minor (Anatolia) on May 15, 1919.

Until then, a Turkish Army in Eastern Turkey had continued to operate and these forces were now to provide the nucleus of resistance. During 1920 Gazi Mustafa Kemal, of 1st World War fame, organised forces against the Greeks and on June 13, 1920 the "Kuvaiye Havaîye Sübesi" (The Air Force branch) was established at Eskişehir. Four reconnaissance and thirteen fighter aircraft, of which only two were really usable, were concentrated at Konya and soon the first two fighting units were formed: 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü (1st aircraft company) at Eskişehir with one Albatros D.III, one Albatros D.V, one Pfalz D.III, one DFW C.V and a Rumpler C.IV, and 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü at Uşak with two Albatros D.III, one Pfalz D.III and an AEG C.IV.

The 15ncü Tayyare Bölüğü at Erzurum was allocated to the forces in the east fighting an Armenian Army and had only one Albatros C.III airworthy. All the aircraft were in a dubious state of serviceability, but were used anyway for vital reconnaissance missions. In mid 1921 due to changing fortunes of war, the front gradually moved east and by August 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü - leaving behind its two reconnaissance machines, some of its personnel and equipment with the 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü - moved to Ankara along with the HQ Directorate of the Air Force. 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü was ordered to Maliköy airfield, 45 km west of Ankara. Nearby, the crucial battle of "Sakarya" took place between August 23 and September 17. Of the old equipment only one Albatros D.III remained, but two former Greek aircraft, a DH9 and a Breguet 14A-2, captured on the eve of the battle were pressed into service. These aircraft flew forty missions in eighteen days during the battle which resulted in a major Greek defeat.

In a treaty with Russia on October 13, 1921 the eastern border of Turkey was secured and a week later a treaty with France fixed the south-eastern border. By then Italian troops had already pulled out of their "area of interest".

During the build up of forces in late 1921 and early 1922 the aviation forces were reorganised on July 5, 1922 into a new "Kuvaiye Havaîye Müfettişliği" (Air Force Inspectorate) at Konya. Ten Breguet 14B-2s were handed over in May from the French forces in Syria and twenty Spad XIII's were procured from the Italian forces through the Italian fighter ace Baracchini. Furthermore, in July 1921 the Navy Flying Service had been re-established with five Gotha WD13s smuggled out of their storing place in Istanbul and transported to Amasra on the Black Sea coast.

When the re-equipped Turkish Army concentrated for its decisive battle (the "Baskumandanlık" battle) near Afyon on August 26, 1922 the Air Force had the following units available: the Aircraft Workshops at Konya with seventeen Spad XIII's (being outfitted with machineguns), four Breguet 14B-2s with faulty engines and one Fiat R-2 being rebuilt after a crash; the Flying School at Adana with one Societa Aeronautica Meccanica Lombarda (SAML) built Aviatik B.1 and one Albatros D.III; the "Frontal Aircraft Company" at Çay with three Spad XIII's, six Breguet 14B-2s and a DH9; and the Seaplane Company at Amasra with three Gotha WD13s.

During the subsequent fourteen day campaign against the Greek Army, the Turkish Aviation Commander Major Fazıl shot down a Greek Breguet 14.

When the Turkish forces captured the main Greek airfield at Gazimir (Paradiso) near Izmir on September 25, a "Tayyare Grubu Kumandanlığı" (Aircraft Group Command) was established there under Major Fazıl. Three aircraft companies were formed with all available aircraft, including the twenty-one aircraft plus ten railway cars of spares captured from the Greeks.

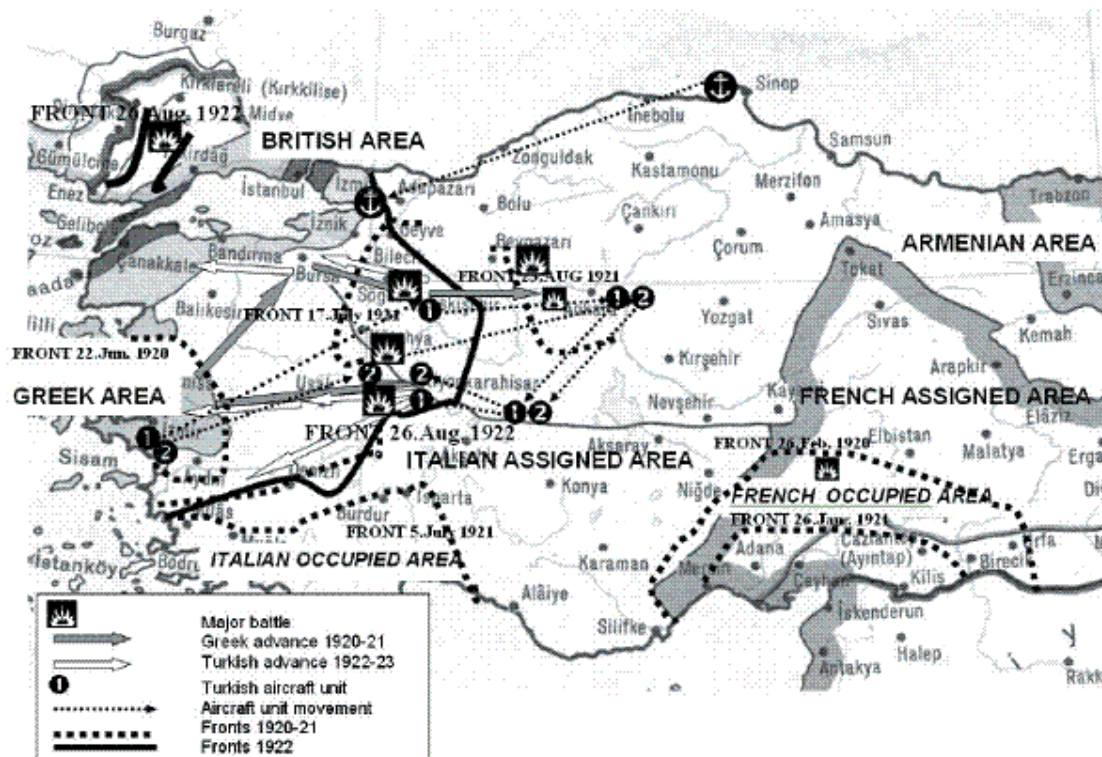
With these forces available the confident Turkish Army entered the Dardanelles Canal Zone in late September. British intelligence then estimated the Turks to have 60 active fighting aircraft whereas the actual number was in fact nineteen.

On July 24, 1923 the peace treaty of Lausanne was signed giving the new Turkish national Republic all of Asia Minor (Anatolia) and the part of Trakya (Trace) in Europe which was Turkish before the war. Turkey promised not to fortify the Straits of the Dardanelles. At last Turkey had obtained peace after having been at war continuously since 1912.



A modest beginning. The 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü at Eskişehir January 20, 1921. To the left an AEG C.IV and to the right an Albatros D.III. (Photo: TuAF)

### MAJOR BATTLES OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE



### German Aircraft Stored at Park Pasa

Quantity: - 9 - Service Period: 1918 -

serial	d/d	unit/date	remarks
LVG C.V (1)			
4569, 7609/17	oct18	15. TyBl/oct18	stored at Maltepe
Albatros D.Va (2)			
7409	oct18		transported to Konya, used in Independence war
7445	oct18		transported to Konya, used in Independence war



<b>Rumpler C.IV (1)</b>		
7956/17	oct18	transported to Konya, used in Independence war
<b>DFW C.V (1)</b>		
4480/18	oct18	transported to Konya, used in Independence war
<b>Pfalz D.III (4)</b>		
1356/18	oct18	transported to Konya, used in Independence war
1359/18	oct18	
1362/18	oct18	
1363/18	oct18	



A DFW C.V (serial 4480/18) was among the four recce and thirteen fighter aircraft salvaged at the Konya Aircraft Depot in 1920. It was made flyable by using egg-white, sheep knuckle gelatine, potato skin starch and various tree gums as dope for its new covering. It served with 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü until force landing August 29, 1920. (Photo: TuAF)

## Aircraft Stored at Maltepe

### Quantity: - 45 - Service Period: 1920

Of 61 aircraft present at Yeşilköy, in November 1919, 45 suitable aircraft were transferred to a new Maltepe Air Station on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The surviving aircraft were subsequently seized by British troops on July 17, 1920. Their eventual fate is unknown.

serial	ex	d/d	remarks
<b>Albatros B.I (7, transferred 3)</b>			
A14/15/17/18			engineless, abandoned at Yeşilköy
A13	578		dual-command, engineless
A16	281		dual-command, engineless
A21			
<b>Albatros C.III (8, transferred 5)</b>			
AK4/59/80			abandoned at Yeşilköy
	727		C.I
AK8	191		
AK39	676		ex 1.TyBl
AK42	522		ex 1.TyBl
AK60	512		ex 1.TyBl
<b>Albatros D.III (14, transferred 13)</b>			
AKD8	1736		
AKD12	1770		engineless
AKD13	1717		engineless
AKD15	1723		engineless
AKD17	1719		engineless
AKD18	1762		engineless
AKD20	1760		engineless
AKD21	1756		engineless
AKD25	1735		
AKD26	1798		abandoned at Yeşilköy, ex 9.TyBl
AKD30	1748		
AKD31	1734		
AKD32	1754		
?	1783		



In late 1920 two Fiat R-2s were obtained in Italy by a Turkish businessman. Named "Erzurumlu Nafiz 1 and 2" after him, they entered service with 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü in early 1921. They both force landed on successive days (August, 14 and 15 1921), just before the crucial Sakarya battle. Only E.N.2 was repaired, but was never used operationally again.

(Photo: TuAF)



A total of four DH9s were captured from the Greek Navy. The first was taken on charge by 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü on August 23, 1921 with the name "İsmet", named after the Turkish west front commanding general. It served faithfully until it was retired in late 1924.

(Photo: TuAF)

serial	ex	d/d	remarks
<b>Halberstadt D.V (10, transferred 9)</b>			
HK1	261		abandoned at Yeşilköy
HK4	266		
HK8	494		
HK21	497		engineless
HK22	498		
HK26	502		engineless
HK28	517		
HK31	514		engineless
?	227		
?	229		
<b>AEG C.IV (7, transferred 6)</b>			
?	5667		engineless
?	5671		engineless
?	5672		engineless
?	5673		engineless
?	5683		engineless
?	5684		engineless
?	5685		engineless, abandoned at Yeşilköy
<b>Fokker D.I (5, transferred 1)</b>			
FD1, 4, 6, 7			abandoned at Yeşilköy
FD8	941		
<b>Fokker D.VII (7, transferred 6)</b>			
FD9	5749		abandoned at Yeşilköy
FD10	5980		
FD11	5896		
FD12	5902		
FD13	5950		
FD14	5981		
FD15	5935		
<b>Nieuport 17 (2)</b>			
K1			engineless
K2			engineless
<b>LVG C.IV (1)</b>			
?	4569		

Pfalz D.III 1359/18 was flown by pilot Vecihi during the first battles in 1920. Four aircraft had been found at the Konya Depot and two were repaired. Of the four crewmembers on the left, only one survived the war. One of the Pfalz was written off in June 1920, the other on August 31. (Photo: TuAF)





## Aircraft Used In Anatolia In 1920

Quantity: - 28 - Service Period: 1920 - 1922

### Aircraft at Konya Air Station April 1920 (ex 3/4.TyBI)

(Four recce and thirteen fighter aircraft: Two flyable, nine repairable, six derelict)

serial	Type	ex	unit/date	wfu date	remarks
	Albatros D.Va	7445/17			not repairable
	Albatros D.Va	7409/17			not repairable
5	Albatros D.III	1731		25mar21	crashed
6	Albatros D.III	1767			engineless
7	Albatros D.III	719			engineless
8	Albatros D.III	1726			engineless
9	Albatros D.III	1787	2.TyBI/jun20, 1.TyBI/mar21 School/aug22	sep22	Named "izmir" and "S2" u/s engineless
11	AEG C.IV	5668			
12	AEG C.IV	4871	4 TyBI/may20, 2.TyBI/jun20, 1.TyBI/jan21	1921	wfu, unrepairable engineless
13	AEG C.IV	5681			
14	AEG C.IV	5670		sep19	crashed Beyşehir
	DFW C.V	4480/18	1.TyBI/aug20	29aug20	u/s after force landing
	Rumpler C.IV	7956/17	1.TyBI/aug20	05sep20	u/s after force landing
	Pfalz D.III	1358/18	4.TyBI/may20, 2.TyBI	jun20	u/s
	Pfalz D.III	1359/18	1.TyBI/aug20	31aug20	damaged beyond repair
	Pfalz D.III	1362/18			
	Pfalz D.III	7409	1.TyBI/aug20	10jan21	force landing, u/s

### Aircraft in Eastern Turkey:

15 Army Corps (Erzurum)

serial	Type	ex	unit/date	wfu date	remarks
AK46	Albatros C.III	543		aug21	u/s
AK79	Albatros C.III	540		aug21	u/s

Farman F30 (4), Morane Parasol (6), Nieuport fighter (1) all unrepairable

### 2nd Aircraft Station At Erzincan 18 August 1920 (ex 2 Tayyare Bölüğü Iraq):

serial	Type	ex	unit/date	wfu date	remarks
8	AEG C.IV	5667		sep21	engineless, to Ankara, wfu
4	Albatros D.III	1728		sep21	to Ankara
7	Albatros D.III	1733		sep21	not repairable
HK7	Halberstadt D.V	503	15 TyBI/dec20		
HK23	Halberstadt D.V	496	15 TyBI/dec20		
HK22	Halberstadt D.V	495		sep21	engineless, to Ankara, wfu
HK25	Halberstadt D.V	500			engineless, wfu



Albatros D.III, S.2 seen at Adana in 1922. Three D.IIIs were salvaged at Konya and S.2 (Okulu 2) survived all its operational flights with 1nci and 2nci Tayyare Bölükleri until it was relegated to training with the arrival of the Spad XIII fighters. It was finally retired in October 1922. (Photo: TuAF)



Two Avro 504Ks were captured from the Greeks. The first in 1920 was not used, but the other (RAF serial H9731) captured in September 1922 was employed as a trainer until it crashed on November 23, 1923. (Photo: TuAF)

### Aircraft Obtained in 1920:

serial	Type	unit/date	wfu date	remarks
	Albatros D.III	16jul20		escaped from Maltepe, not used
	Avro 504K	2.TyBI/sep20	sep20	ex Greek, captured Çay wfu, lack of spares
	Ansaldo (Fiat 300HP)	12dec20, 2.TyBI	15aug21	name "Erzurumlu Nafiz 1"

Obtained in Italy by Mr.E Nafiz, damaged in forced landing on delivery. Crashed, crew killed

### Aircraft Obtained in 1921:

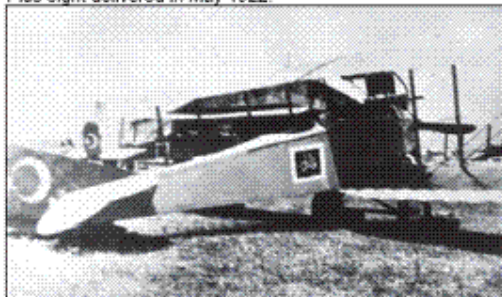
serial	d/d	unit/date	wfu date	remarks	name
Fiat R2 (260HP Fiat)		Obtained in Italy by Erzurumlu Nafiz			
	apr21	1./2.TyBI/14aug21	aug22	force landed, wfu	"Erzurumlu Nafiz 2"
DH9 Captured from Greek Navy					
	23aug21	2.TyBI	1924	wfu	"izmet"

**Breguet 14A-2 Captured from Greek Army**  
 21sep21 2.TyBI 27jun22 force landed, crew prisoners "Sakarya"

**Aircraft Obtained in 1922:**

serial	d/d	unit/date	wfu date	remarks	name
<b>SAML/Aviatik B.1 (100HP Fiat) Procured in Italy</b>					
S1	07feb22	2.TyBI, School/aug20	1924	A18162, wfu	"Karga"
<b>Breguet 14B-2 (10) Gift from French Government, delivered from French Army in Adana</b>					
"10"	may22	2.TyBI	22jul22	shot down, crew killed	

Plus eight delivered in May 1922.



A single SAML/Aviatik B.1 was obtained in Italy in 1921 to serve in the reconnaissance role. It proved unsuitable and was relegated to training. With the Turkish serial S1 and the name "Karga" it was used by the Flying School until withdrawn in late 1924. (Photo: TuAF)



Aircraft of the "Cephe Bölüğü" (Front Company) lined up at Akşehir before the Baskumandanlık Battle. In front is the DH9 "İsmet", then four of the ten Breguet 14B-2s delivered by the French. (Photo: TuAF)

**Gotha WD13 (5) Smuggled out of Navy Depot in Istanbul in July 1921:**

18jun22	1.DzTyBI	aug22	wfu
jul22	1.DzTyBI	18dec22	crashed into sea
jul22	1.DzTyBI	1922	wfu
jul22	1.DzTyBI	may23	wfu
oct22	1.DzTyBI	may23	wfu

**Spad XIII (200HP Hispano) (20)**

Bought from by Italian fighter pilot Baracchini (from stocks in Germany?)

?	1.TyBI	"Şehit Behçet"
?	1.TyBI	"Şehit Sirri"
?	1.TyBI	"Şehit Fehmi"
?	1.TyBI	"Şehit Bahattin"
?	2.TyBI	"Şehit Cemal"
111	?	

Fourteen more were delivered but only used after the termination of the war.

**Albatros C.XV (2)**

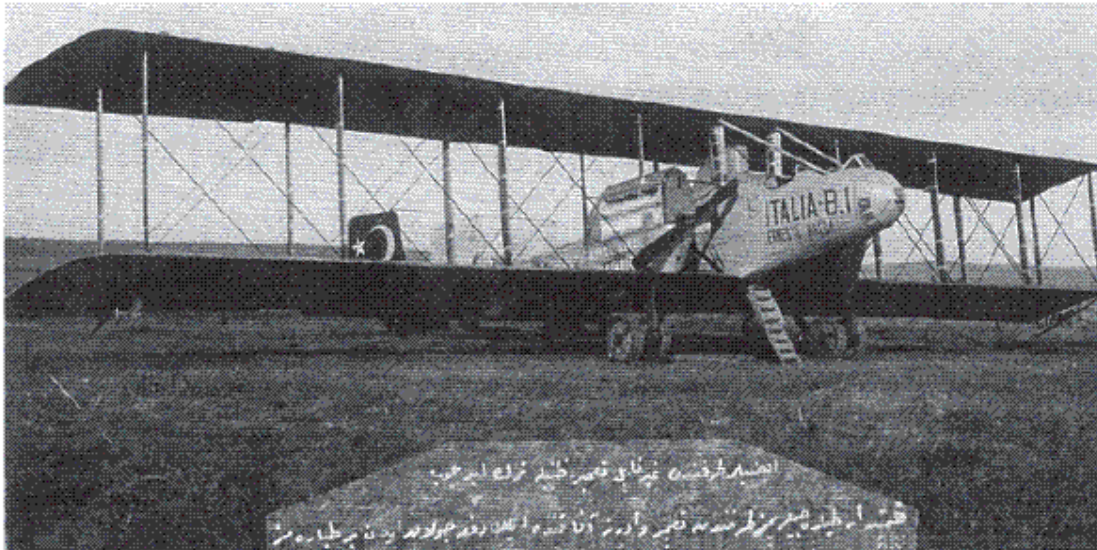
Twenty-one obtained from agents in Germany (Denmark) transported via Russia

jul22	1.TyBI/28aug22	1923	wfu	"1nci Albatros"
jul22	1.TyBI/28aug22	1923	wfu	"2nci Albatros"

**Aircraft Captured from Greek Forces During the Final Offensive August 28, 1922:**

serial	d/d	unit/date	wfu date	remarks	name
<b>Breguet 14A-2 (10) One shot down and captured, four captured at Afyon, and five at Gazimир</b>					
26aug22	2.TyBI/11sep22			shot down, taken into use	"Garıpçe"
sep22	1.TyBI			found at Afyon	"174ncü Alay"
sep22	1.TyBI			found at Afyon	"Erzurumlu Nafiz 4"
sep22	1.TyBI			found at Afyon	
sep22	1.TyBI			found at Afyon	
sep22				found at Gazimир	
sep22				found at Gazimир	
sep22				found at Gazimир	
sep22				found at Gazimир	
<b>Spad XIII (2) found at Afyon in derelict condition</b>					
sep22				found at Afyon, derelict	
sep22				found at Afyon, derelict	
<b>De Havilland DH9 (3) ex Greek Navy captured at Paradiso/Gazimир</b>					
sep22	2.TyBI			found at Gazimир	"Ganimet No.1"

sep22	2. TyBI	found at Gaziemir	
sep22	2. TyBI	found at Gaziemir	
<b>Nieuport 24/27 (1+2) 3 flyable captured at Gaziemir, 2 wrecks at Uşak</b>			
sep22	2. TyBI	found at Gaziemir	"Ganimet No.3"
sep22	2. TyBI	found at Gaziemir	"Ganimet No.4"
sep22	2. TyBI	found at Gaziemir	"Ganimet No.5"
<b>Avro 504K (1) Captured from Greek Army at Gaziemir</b>			
H9730 or 34	sep22	School	23nov23 crashed



In May 1923 a Caproni C.5 bomber converted to Breda B.1 standard landed near Edirne in European Turkey. On June 7, 1923 pilot Vecihi fixed the aircraft in a few days and flew it to Izmir. The aircraft was named "Vecihi" but was soon grounded due to a lack of spares. It was never taken into the inventory. (Photo: www.tayyareci.com)



In 1922 twenty Spad XIII's were bought in Italy from money donated by Turks living in Germany. They arrived in the harbor at Mersin in early August and four were hurriedly armed at the Depot at Konya and sent to the front. The Spads served as fighters and then trainers until 1930. (Photo: TuAF)



On August 26, Major Fazil the Commander of the Turkish Aviation forces shot down a Greek Breguet 14. It was repaired and used by the Turkish forces. (Photo: TuAF)



# PILOT FAZIL BEY – AN AVIATION HERO

Aviation is full of heroes, airmen who are credited with 5, 100 or even 200 air victories, pilots who have killed themselves in the final act of destroying an enemy.

Others, spend years committed to their duties, forwarding aviation and protecting their nations as well as possible.

The Turkish aviator Fazil is one of those last mentioned spending his young life in constant war for 10 years only to be killed in a training accident after the war was over.

In January 1919 leading Turkish personalities and former government officials were arrested by the British and deported to Malta. The Allies handed over a reorganization scheme for the Turkish armed forces which comprised a force of 50,000 Gendarmes led by Allied officers; no aircraft, armored cars or naval vessels were allowed. The final coup de grace was given Turkish nationality when Greek forces were allowed to invade and landed by British warships in the province of Izmir (Smyrna) on the 15th of May 1919. This event finally sparked resistance amongst large sections of the Turkish population. Soon measures were taken -in the fall of 1919- to establish a Turkish national state and to fight all foreign troops in Anatolia. The founder of the modern Turkish state Mustafa Kemal Pasa was instrumental in this effort and he emerged as leader of the new state.

Also in January 1919, Yeşilköy Station was seized by the British and all aircraft there taken into custody and the personnel interned. Shortly after, the British started to occupy stations on the Baghdad railway and other strategic locations. Any Turkish military equipment including aircraft found was destroyed.

The first mention of Captain Fazil is in late 1919 when a new Ottoman foundation is created (to circumvent the Allied prohibition on military flying) the “Turkish Air Transport Foundation” under the Postal Ministry. Captain Fazil was present accompanied by 1.Lt. Şakir Hasim and the civil pilots Fehmi, Mazlum and Vecihi. The idea was, like in Germany, to use some of the aircraft stored at Maltepe for postal flights. This venture was overtaken by events, however.

In October 1919 British and Greek units took over the Yeşilköy field completely. Of 61 former Ottoman Army Air Service aircraft present, 45 suitable aircraft were transferred later the same month to a new Maltepe Air Station on the Asian side of Bosphorus. The interned aviation personnel were moved there as well and were to maintain the valuable equipment and do some training.

## **A NEW ARMY AVIATION ORGANIZATION**

Among the interned personnel there was a wish to join Mustafa Kemal's independence forces and on March 16, 1920 two managed to escape. After this a larger scheme was planned under the leadership of Fazil who was second in command of the station, together with other pilot officers, civil pilots and a mechanic. Several aircraft clandestinely were made flyable and fuelled. In the night of 6/7 June the four aircraft were started up, but one burned when fuel caught fire and two crashed in the take off. Only one, flown by Lt.Hasim managed to get airborne only to run out of fuel and crash land near Iznik. All the involved personnel, however, managed to escape and make their way to Konya. The other aircraft at Maltepe were seized by British troops on 17th of July 1920. Their eventual fate is unknown.

Meanwhile at Konya a provisional Air Station had been formed and with only a handful of aircraft flyable the “Kartal Müfrezesi” (Eagle Detachment) was formed with Captain Fazil as its Commander and civil pilot Vecihi as the next most experienced pilot. Shortly after the unit was transferred to the front at Uşak with one flyable Albatros D.III fighter, a fortnight later an AEG C.IV was added. The unit had a personnel of Fazil plus 4 other pilots. Skirmishes and soon a battle was underway near Uşak and Vecihi was in the air for the first time on August 15. During

the next 5 days 13 more flight were made by both Fazil and Vecihi during which Vecihi had an inconclusive fight with a Greek aircraft. On August 20 Vecihi attacked an enemy HQ near Demirci with 2 x 10kg bombs and machinegun fire and this was repeated the next day by both Fazil and Vecihi. Nevertheless Uşak had to be abandoned on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the AEG C.IV set on fire so not to fall into the hands of the advancing Greeks. The Kartal Müfrezesi withdrew to Afyon.



The Albatros D.III fighter in which Fazil flew most of his flights in 1920-21

Meanwhile on June 13, 1920 a new Army Aviation organization had been formed, the "Kuvaiye Havaïye Sübesi" (The Air Force branch) at Eskişehir. After the withdrawal of the Kartal Müfrezesi two fighting units were formed: 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü (1st aircraft company) at Eskişehir with one Albatros D.III, one Albatros D.V, one Pfalz D.III, one DFW C.V and a Rumpler C.IV, and the Kartal Müfrezesi was renamed 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü at Afyon with two Albatros D.III and one Pfalz D.III under command of Capt. Fazil with two other pilots in its complement. The 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü was put under the command of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Division at Uşak. Shortly after the 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü was moved to Eskişehir with its 3 fighter aircraft and from here operations starts again on September 4<sup>th</sup>. At this time a Greek Avro 504 emergency lands near Çine and the crew is captured. Fazil rushes to the scene, repairs the aircraft and flies it to Afyon. Unfortunately the aircraft is from then on not flyable and of no use.



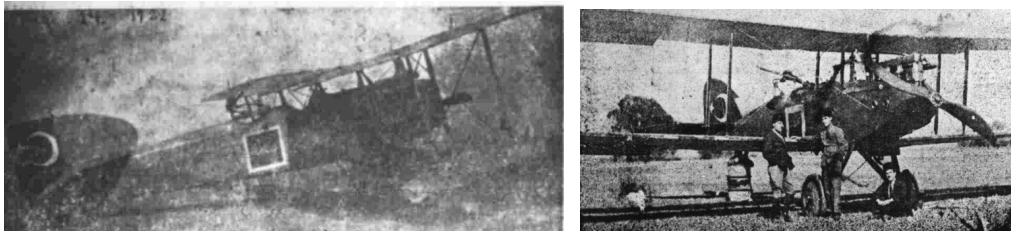
the AEG C.IV and Albatros D.III of the Kartal Müfrezesi

At the beginning of the year the Greek army moves forward over two fronts, to the south near Afyon and to the north from Bursa towards Eskişehir. Pilot Vecihi is moved to the 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü at Eskişehir whereas 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü is moved to Afyon Karahisar with only the Albatros fighter serviceable. From January 6 the Greek army attacks to the north and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of İnönü develops. Here Vecihi is almost single handed responsible for the invaluable reconnaissance which makes it possible to stop and repel the Greeks. On the southern front Fazil and Lt.Halil makes 5 flights in the Albatros.

In mid March the Greek army again tries to move forward on the Eskişehir and Afyon front and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of İnönü is fought. Once more air reconnaissance performed by the small Turkish air units save the day and the Greeks are forced to retreat. During the battle Vecihi engages a Greek fighter in an air battle, but must disengage due to engine failure. Later Lt. Fehmi is killed in the same aircraft when he engages Greek aircraft trying to bomb the airfield. Later when Greek aircraft bombs Eskişehir Vecihi's sister is among the civil victims killed. The 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü could muster 6 pilots and 4 observers and at the end of the battle only an AEG C.IV and a DFW C.V are serviceable. To the south Fazil and Halil makes 2 flights a day between March 23 and April 1<sup>st</sup> in the venerable Albatros. In order to appreciate the effort one must keep in mind that the old aircraft was rigged with canvass doped with egg-white, used plant oil for the engine and petrol was, when it was available at all, of dubious quality. The 10kg bombs used were home manufactured at Konya. During April and May Fazil and Halil keep a close look on the southern front and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June the Battle of Kütahya is fought. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fazil fights an air battle with seven Greek aircraft only to experience jammed guns, later the same day Lt. Hayrettin prevents four aircraft from bombing the airfield.

At this time on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1921, with the Greeks concentrating their advance to the north and moving forwards along the Sakarya river towards Ankara, the capital of the young Turkish Republic, the two Turkish aircraft units move east to Polatli west of Ankara. On August 12<sup>th</sup> 1nci Tayyare Bölüğü - leaving behind its two reconnaissance machines, some of its personnel and equipment with the 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü - moved to Ankara along with the HQ Directorate of the Air Force. 2nci Tayyare Bölüğü still under command of Capt. Fazil and with all available aircraft was then ordered to Maliköy airfield, 45 km west of Ankara.

Close to here the crucial battle of "Sakarya" took place between August 23 and September 17. This battle was of outmost importance to the Turkish Army, if it was lost then the country was lost. The Greek army was far superior in most fields and their aircraft bombed bridges and Turkish positions. To the Turkish Army, as usual, reconnaissance was of paramount importance if the superior enemy was to be repelled. Of the old equipment only the old Albatros D.III remained, as one aircraft was lost on August 15 with both crews being killed.



The Breguet 14 named "Sakarya" and the DH.9 named "İsmet" the only Turkish aircraft available during the crucial Sakarya Battle.

Fortunately two former Greek aircraft, a D.H.9 and a Breguet 14A-2, were captured and on the eve of the battle pressed into service. These aircraft flown by mainly Fazil and Vecihi flew 40 missions in 18 days under very poor weather conditions, but each time providing valuable and detailed reconnaissance reports. The Greek army was thoroughly defeated and had to retreat far west leaving a myriad of sorely needed equipment to the victorious Turks. Worse still for the Greeks was the political effect, now the Allies had doubts about the Greek cause and started to support the Turkish Republic with military equipment. Soon both Italy and France abandoned their areas in Turkey. Before that in late 1920 the Soviet Union had already started to support Turkey with among other things ammunition and petrol. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1921



France handed over a full squadron of ten Breguet 14A-2s to the Turkish Army at Adana. The Turkish pilots receiving the aircraft were lead by Capt. Fazil.



The handover of 10 Breguet 14A-2s from the French army in Syria at Adana on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1921

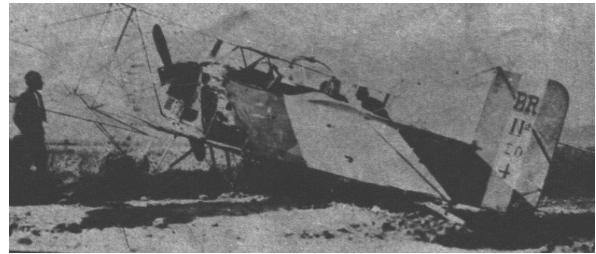
During the build up of forces in 1922 the aviation forces were reorganized on July 5, 1922 into a new "Kuvaiye Havaiye Müfettişliği" (Air Force Inspectorate) at Konya. Furthermore in July 1921 the Navy Flying Service had been re-established with five Gotha WD.13s smuggled out of their storing place in Istanbul and transported to Amasra on the Black Sea coast. Their presence now made it possible for a resurrected Turkish Navy to break a Greek sea blockade in the Black Sea and soon shiploads of equipment both from the Soviet Union, but also Germany flowed in to the Turkish forces.

The 10 Breguet 14B-2s were now supplemented by 20 SPAD XIII. The 20 SPAD XIII were in early 1922 bought in Italy with money collected by Turks in Germany and the sale arranged by the well known Italian fighter ace Baracchini. After a dramatic sea transport, avoiding Greek patrols, they arrived at Mersin harbor in August 1922. As the aircraft were delivered without armament they were transported to the Depot at Konya for the installation of machineguns. This proved troublesome as the interrupter gear was not calibrated for the German guns available and only shortly before the Turkish offensive, four were hurriedly issued to the Western Front Aircraft Company. On May 7<sup>th</sup> during the training for the Turkish offensive Fazil had to land a Breguet 14 with a faulty engine and he was wounded, nothing however, could keep him away from his duties and on May 10 he was back at the unit. During June and July 1922 the Turkish aircraft stepped up their flights in order to keep Greek aircraft away from spotting the build up of forces in the area east of Afyon. On June 27 a Breguet 14A-2 was lost when its engine failed and it landed in enemy territory, its crew taken prisoner. A month later on July 25 another Br.14A-2 during reconnaissance near Afyon was shot down by a Greek fighter, its crew killed. Later the Greek forces sent a telegram to the Turkish unit recording the event.



Two of the four SPAD XIII arriving at the front on August 25th

When the re-equipped Turkish Army concentrated for its decisive battle (the "Baskumandanlik" battle) near Afyon on August 26, 1922 the Air Force had the following units available: the Aircraft Workshops at Konya with seventeen SPAD XIII's (being outfitted with machineguns), four Breguet 14B-2s with faulty engines and one FIAT R.2 being rebuilt after a crash; the Flying School at Adana with one Aviatik SAML B.1 and one Albatros D.III (Fazil's old trusted aircraft). The Turkish offensive air forces were amalgamated into the "Frontal Aircraft Company" at Çay with three SPAD XIII's, six Breguet 14B-2s and a D.H.9 under the command of Capt. Fazil and with a handful of pilots and observers. In addition the Seaplane Company at Amasra was active with three Gotha WD.13s. On August 23 a Turkish air offensive was started and already the next day there were air battles between the air forces. Finally on the 25<sup>th</sup> the first four SPAD XIII's with installed machineguns were delivered. Fazil took to the air with a newly delivered SPAD on the 26<sup>th</sup> and during a sweep to prevent Greek aircraft from coming over Turkish territory he shot down a Breguet 14A-2. (when Turkish forces later occupied the area on September 11<sup>th</sup> the aircraft was found, repaired and taken into the Turkish inventory under the name "Garipçe" – the name of the location where it was found!).



SPAD XIII fighter flown by Capt. Fazil    The Greek Br.14A-2 shot down by Fazil on August 26 1922.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> the Turkish aircraft dropped 20 x 10kg bombs on Greek positions. The Turkish main attack started on August 30 and despite bad weather Turkish aircraft bombed and machine-gunned Greek positions between 0715 and 0830 seven times. During the next period, until Izmir was captured, 16 fighter missions and 12 reconnaissance flights were performed by Capt. Fazil. On August 31<sup>st</sup> alone he and his observer Osman Nuri made 5 flights. On September 3<sup>rd</sup> he had another air battle with a Greek plane which tried to reconnoiter the area around Alaşehir. In the middle of this the aircraft unit managed, with ten captured trucks, to keep up with the fast advancing army.



A tired looking Capt. Fazil as the C/O of the "Garb Tayyare Bölüğü" in front of a new Breguet 14

Providing petrol and bombs for the aircraft was a large problem. On September 9<sup>th</sup> the city of Izmir was entered by Turkish troops but the fights continued and the area around Izmir was bombed on September 15<sup>th</sup>. On the 18<sup>th</sup> several Greek ships were attacked in the bay. When capturing the Greek airfield at Afyon 4 Br.14A-2s, 4 Nieuport fighters and two SPAD XIIIs were captured. At Uşak two airworthy Breguet 14A-2 and large depots of ammunition, 18240 bombs and 40 tonnes of petrol were found. At the Paradiso Airfield, which was renamed Gaziemir, no less than 12 operational aircraft were captured (3 DH.9, 5 Br.14A-2, 1 Avro 504 and 3 Nieuport fighters) not to mention 30 train wagons loaded with everything an air force needed, immediately everything was taken into the inventory. The Turkish forces lost four aircraft during the advance all emergency landings due to faulty engines, no aircrew were lost.



The equipment of the Lt.Col. Fazil commanded Izmir Tayyare Grubu at Gaziemir Airfield in late 1922

The Paradiso airfield was taken over by Turkish forces on September 15<sup>th</sup> and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> this was celebrated with a parade of the captured equipment and an air show where aircraft performed aerobatics. With the capture of this main Greek airfield, a "Tayyare Grubu Kumandanlığı" (Aircraft Group Command) was established there under Fazil promoted to Lt. Colonel at the age of 33. Three aircraft companies were formed with all available aircraft, including the twenty-one aircraft captured from the Greeks.

With these forces available the confident Turkish Army entered the Dardanelles Canal Zone in late September only to regain Istanbul on October 6<sup>th</sup>. British intelligence then estimated the Turks to have 60 active fighting aircraft whereas the actual number was in fact 19.

With the signing of the armistice at Mudanya on October 11<sup>th</sup> the Turkish air operations ended.