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TURKISH SAILORS IN THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL STRUGGLE

MİLLİ MÜCADELE DÖNEMİNDE TÜRK DENİZCİLERİ

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Abstract

This article is about the activities of Turkish Sailors during the period of National Struggle between the years of 1919 and 1923. Following the Armistice of Mondros, the National Struggle was started by the great leader Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK. For this reason to win the victory, money, weapons, ammunition material and personnel had to be provided by the way of ships therefore it became necessity of organizing a smuggled naval transport function at the Black Sea for the support of the Western Front. As a result, on 10 July 1920, "Directorship of Naval Affairs" had been established related to Ministry of National Defence that means "Naval actions, duties". Main duty of this organization was the management of transportation and shipping at Black Sea. The first Turkish Grand National Assembly deputation, headed by Bekir Sami (Kunduh), paraphed a draft treaty with the Soviet Government on 24th August 1920 in Moscow relating to financial and military aid to Turkey. In this paraph, it was also decided that transportation of supplies from Soviet Russian ports to Turkey, had to be organized by the sea route. In this context from September 1920, transportation of ammunitions and money from the Russian ports to Turkish ports in the Black Sea was started. Throughout the Turkish War of Independence, nearly 300,000 tons of supplies of every kind were transported to the Turkish ports, from the various Black Sea ports by 26 ships and boats of various sizes, to support the military fronts in Anatolia. In this period some sailors secretly moved to Anatolia, to participate in land battles actually. Their comrades contributed significantly to the strategic maritime struggle, particularly in the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara. Those sailors who remained in İstanbul during this time, founded the undercover Naval Assistance Organization, and provided personnel and equipment to the maritime elements of the National Government. They also gave invaluable intelligence support to the National Forces fighting for the Turkish Independence. As a result we can say that Turkish Sailors through four years by carrying the transportation at Black Sea and performing the duties for the Western Front that requires weapons, ammunition and soldiers, had played an important role for the achievement of the Turkish Independence War.

Key Words: Black Sea, Entente Powers, Naval Shipping, Turkish National Struggle (Turkish Independence War), Turkish Navy

Özet

Bu çalışma, Milli Mücadele döneminde 1919-1923 yılları arasında Türk Denizcilerinin faaliyetlerini içermektedir. Mondros Mütarekesi'ni takiben, Ulu Önder

Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK tarafından başlatılan Milli Mücadele hareketinin zafere ulaşması, bir nevi deniz yoluyla sağlanacak olan para, silah, cephane, malzeme ve personele bağlı olduğundan Batı Cephesi'ni her bakımdan desteklemek için Karadeniz'de kaçak olarak bir deniz taşıma görevinin meydana getirilmesi zorunlu olmuştur. Bu sebeple 10 Temmuz 1920 tarihinde Milli Müdafaa Vekaleti'ne bağlı olarak denizcilığe ait faaliyetleri yürüten "Umûr-ı Bahriye Müdürlüğü" teşkil edilmiştir. Bu müdürlüğün başlıca görevi, başta Karadeniz'deki nakliyat olmak üzere emrindeki deniz teşkillerini sevk ve idare etmek olmuştur. 24 Ağustos 1920 tarihinde Bekir Sami Bey başkanlığında Moskova'ya giden ilk TBMM heyeti ile Sovyet Rusya Hükümeti arasında Türkiye'ye yapılacak mali ve askeri yardım hakkında bir antlaşma taslağı parafe edilmiştir. Bahse konu taslakta Sovyet Rus limanlarından Türkiye'ye yapılacak askeri yardımın deniz yolu ile gerçekleştirilmesi kararlaştırılmış ve 1920 yılının Eylül ayından itibaren Sovyet Rus limanlarından Karadeniz'deki Türk limanlarına deniz yolu ile mühimmat ve para transferine başlanmıştır. Milli Mücadele süresince Karadeniz'deki lojistik nakliyat faaliyetleri kapsamında, irili ufaklı 26 tekne ile yaklaşık 300 bin ton malzeme Karadeniz'deki muhtelif limanlardan Türk limanlarına taşınmış ve bu suretle, Anadolu'daki cephele desteklenmiştir. Bu dönemde bazı denizciler gizlice Anadolu'ya geçerek kara savaşlarına fiili olarak katılmış, bazıları ise Karadeniz'de ve Marmara'da lojistik nakliyatı canları pahasına sürdürmüşlerdir. İstanbul'da kalan denizciler ise, Muavenet-i Bahriye Grubu'nu kurarak, Millî Hükümetin deniz gücünü personel ve materyal olarak desteklemiş ve aynı zamanda Millî Kuvvetlere istihbarat desteği sağlamıştır. Sonuç itibari ile Türk Denizcileri her türlü yokluk ve zorluklar altında dört yıl boyunca özellikle Karadeniz'deki nakliyatı yürütmek suretiyle, Batı Cephesi'nin ihtiyacı olan silah, cephane ve asker taşınması görevini ifa ederek, zaferin kazanılmasında büyük bir rol oynamışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karadeniz, İtilaf Devletleri, Deniz Nakliyatı, Türk Milli Mücadelesi (Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı), Türk Denizcileri

INTRODUCTION

Throughout First World War I, which lasted 4 years, the relatively weak Ottoman Navy encountered great losses and came out of war extremely worn out. The control of the remaining ships was passed on to the Control Commission founded by the Entente Powers in accordance with the provisions of the Mondoros Armistice, signed on 30 October 1918.

Following the decisions outlined in the Mondoros Armistice, the control of the ships belonging to the Turkish Navy was passed on to the Control Commission founded by the Entente Powers. The combat capabilities of the Turgutreis, Hamidiye and Mecidiye cruisers were substantially limited and they were kept inactive in the Golden Horn by the occupying forces of the England and France. The ammunition and guns of the Yavuz battle cruiser were removed and she was transferred to the İzmit region on the grounds that she could adversely affect sea traffic through the Golden Horn. During this period, only a small number of units were on active duty; the Akhisar and Draç torpedo boats performed coast guard duties in the Sea of Marmara, the Hızırreis gunboat, in İzmir Bay was also on coast guard duty and the Nusret and Tir-i Müjkan conducted mine counter measures operations in the Saros Bay.¹

Before the Turkish War of Independence began, the Naval Ministry sent the Preveze gunboat to Sinop and the Aydınreis gunboat to Trabzon in February 1919 for surveillance, reconnaissance and patrol duties. However, a lack of coal to fuel the propulsion system ensured that the Preveze and Aydınreis remained in harbor until the end of 1919. During the early stages of the Turkish War of Independence, these two gunboats did not return to İstanbul,

¹Mithat Işın, *İstiklâl Harbi Deniz Cephesi*, Deniz Matbaası, İstanbul, 1946, p.69.

despite heavy pressure from the İstanbul Government. Instead, they were placed under the command of the National Government and formed the core of the Turkish War of Independence Shipping Fleet. Meanwhile the Turkish War of Independence officially started by Mustafa Kemal's landing to Samsun on 19 May 1919 out of the Bandırma Steamer as the duty of Inspector, 9th Army Brigadier General. Mustafa Kemal Pasha sent a telegram from Samsun to the Ministry of War concerning to Aydınreis and Preveze Gunboats need for coal on 20 May 1919.² After this telegram 500 ton of coal was sent from İstanbul.

1. ORGANIZATION OF THE ANATOLIAN FLEET

The Turkish War of Independence began to take shape in 1920. As the successes grew, the importance, as well as the priority of the Western Front in winning an absolute victory, became even greater.

As a result, maintaining the logistic shipping of arms, ammunition and all kinds of equipment in the Black Sea gained vital importance. The formation of a maritime shipping organization in the Black Sea emerged as a crucial operational requirement. On 10 July 1920, the *Directorate of Naval Affairs (Umur-ı Bahriye Müdürlüğü)* was founded under the Ministry of National Defense, and was charged with organizing and maintaining strategic logistic shipping through the Black Sea and the other areas. On 1 March 1921, this organization was renamed the "*Naval Department Directorate*". That unit, which undertook enormous responsibilities to provide the fronts in Anatolia with arms, materials and ammunition with only a small number of ships, despite the lack of important means, skills, equipment and human force, was located in a few rooms of a stone building in Samanpazarı, in Ankara.³ All existing naval institutions in the country, directed by the National Government, were assigned to this Directorate. The Directorate of Naval Affairs was extremely successful in organizing local surface units and volunteers and in forming an intelligence network to discover the movements of the enemy ships. As a result, logistic transportation was carried out very smoothly and was expertly coordinated.⁴ This Directorate was directed under the command of Lieutenant Ahmet Şevket (Doruker) until June 1923.

In the subsequent stages of the Turkish War of Independence, due to the growing need for maritime shipping and the increase in the quantity and quality of the units and small ships, the Directorate of Naval Affairs was extended. On 1 March 1921, this organization was renamed the "*Naval Department Directorate (Bahriye Dairesi Reisliği)*". During the Turkish War of Independence, *Trabzon Naval Shipping Command, Samsun Naval Detachment Command, Amasra Naval Command, Ereğli Naval Shipping Command* in Black Sea Region; *İzmit Naval Command* in İzmit; *Fethiye Naval Reserve Group* in Fethiye and *Eğirdir Lake Naval Detachment* in Eğirdir were established, directly under the command of Naval Department Directorate in Ankara.⁵ *Port Masters* and *Coastal Surveillance Stations* were also established so as to carry out reconnaissance and surveillance activities to support strategic maritime shipping.

² The details of above-mentioned telegram is given in the below;

"Conducting surveillance and reconnaissance mission throughout the coastal line, and providing security in this area is particularly important for the moment. Two gunboats (One in Sinop and the other in Trabzon) has long been keeping anchored because of lack of coal. Although Samsun Port Naval Command reported that Naval Ministry would send coal with Giresun Steamer, so as not to lose time to carry out surveillance mission in the coastal area, which is highly crucial in the meantime, I kindly request you to send 500 tons of coal for at least two gunboats immediately." (General Staff Military History Archive, War of Independence Collection, Box Nu. 2474, File Nu.78, Document Nu. 14, Paper Nu. 84)

³ Methi Bayar, *İstiklâl Savaşı'nda Türk Denizcileri*, Kenan Matbaası, İstanbul, 1945, p.35.

⁴ Afif Büyüktuğrul, *Osmanlı Deniz Harp Tarihi*, Vol.V, Deniz Basımevi, İstanbul, 1977, p.77.

⁵ Işın, *Ibid.*,p.60.

At that time the necessity for arms, ammunitions, money and political support became an important issue for the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Since the Bolsheviks were also fighting against Allied imperialism, Bolshevik Russia became the first aim of the Turkish Nationalists to start communication and form an alliance with them. After the Turkish Grand National Assembly was opened in Ankara in April 1920, Mustafa Kemal decided to send a deputation, headed by Bekir Sami (Kunduh) to Moscow in July 1920, to establish connections with the Soviet Government and to get arms and ammunitions and financial aid from them. On 24th August 1920, a draft treaty was paraphed in Moscow between Turkish deputation and Soviet Government relating to financial and military aid to Turkey. It was also decided that for transporting supplies from Soviet Russian ports to Turkey, naval shipping had to be organized. From September 1920 transportation of ammunitions and money from the Russian Ports to Trabzon was started.⁶ In this context, *Trabzon Shipping Detachment*, which was founded on 21 September 1920, was renamed the "*Trabzon Naval Shipping Command*" with the directive issued by the Ministry of National Defense on 26 October 1920.⁷ Trabzon Naval Shipping Command played a vital role throughout the Turkish War of Independence in directing strategic naval shipping in a very professional manner. This Command planned, organized and executed strategic shipping from Soviet Russian ports to Turkey as well as amongst the Turkish ports in the Black Sea.

Within the basis of Soviet Assistance Agreement of 16 March 1921, almost all kinds of weapon, ammunition, equipment, war material of all sorts, such as machine guns, artillery pieces and even aircraft were transported from Soviet Russia.⁸ Moreover, Turkish troops, weapons and military material were transported from the Eastern ports to the Western ports without any casualty to reinforce Turkish Army in the Western Front. This Command acted as the backbone and brain of the entire Turkish naval operations of the Anatolian Fleet during the Turkish War of Independence.

Samsun Naval Command, which was founded by naval officers on 21 July 1920 shortly after the foundation of Directorate of Naval Affairs.⁹ This command was tasked to defend Trabzon, an important shipping centre, against a potential attack from enemy ships, and to train and educate the officers and cadets.¹⁰ Coastal defense and struggle with the Pontus gangs were among the other activities of this command.

Karadeniz Ereğli Naval Shipping Command was founded on 17 April 1921 in Ereğli. Its mission was to conduct maritime shipping between İstanbul-Akçakoca and Trabzon-Akçakoca as well as to provide logistic and base support to the transportation ships and vehicles in its

⁶ Mehmet Perinçek, *Atatürk'ün Sovyetler'le Görüşmeleri*, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 2014, pp.59-60

⁷ Emrullah Nutku; "Trabzon Nakliyat-ı Bahriye Komutanlığı", *Yakın Tarihimiz*, İstanbul, Temmuz 1962, Vol-I, Nu.5, p.149.

⁸ Çağatay Benhür, "1920'li Yıllarda Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri", *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol.24, 2008, p.278.

⁹ *Harp Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, Nu.52, (Haziran 1965) Document Nu: 1192, Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı Yayını.

¹⁰ *Samsun Naval Academy* was restructured and activated on 28 March 1921 as a subordinate unit to Samsun Naval Command. With the aim of completing the education of Heybeliada Naval Academy cadets and engineers (third lieutenants) who covertly left İstanbul to join the National Forces of Anatolian Government, Samsun Naval Academy inaugurated training and education with 15 cadets in a rental house in Samsun. However, due to the willingness and strong desire of the officers and cadets to participate in the Turkish War of Independence and manpower shortcomings of the Anatolian Fleet, Samsun Naval Academy had to terminate its educational activities, and was disbanded on 25 September 1921. Some of the cadets were assigned to various ships under the command of Trabzon Naval Shipping Command for meeting the urgent officer requirements aboard ships; some joined in the struggle against the Pontus gangs, and some others moved to Anatolia to participate in the land battles. (Soner Polat-Figen Atabey, *İstiklal Harbi'nde Bahriyemiz*, Dz.K.K.İğni Basımevi, Ankara, 2003, p.57.)

area of responsibility. This command also kept records of military goods transported at the western Black Sea and reported daily to the Naval Department Directorate. Ereğli Naval Shipping Command, moved to Amasra on 23 January 1922, with a new title of "*Amasra Naval Command*." Naval activities of this unit were executed by Zonguldak Central Port Master. Amasra Naval Command concentrated on reconnaissance and surveillance activities at the western parts of the Black Sea and, when the opportunity arose, engaged hostile units from time to time.

In response to the growing importance of maritime shipping activities in the Sea of Marmara and to defend the gulf of İzmit, the *İzmit Naval Command* was founded on 28 June 1921. İzmit Naval Command maintained maritime shipping in the area as well as contributing greatly to land transportation by repairing the railroad bridges damaged during the First World War. Naval Units that were founded at the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean reported directly to the Western Front Command. The *Fethiye Naval Reserve Group* which was established in 16 March 1921, and Port Masters carried out coastguard and transportation duties as well as gathered intelligence in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean regions. The responsibility for shipping military supplies to the Western Front, fell to the *Eğirdir Lake Naval Detachment Command*. This Detachment was highly successful in transporting supplies to the Western Front from Antalya through Eğirdir Lake. These countrywide logistic support activities were conducted with great success due to the exceptional management and meticulous planning of the Naval Department Directorate.¹¹

Apart from these detachment and commands, a Naval Air Detachment which was referred to as "*Amasra Naval Air Base*" was established in Amasra in November, 1921. During the Turkish War of Independence, Turkish sailors did their utmost within their capacity, and mobilized any option to further increase the effectiveness of naval operations through the seas. In this context, Naval Air Base was activated at the end of 1921 by the transfer of three seaplanes in covert methods from naval depots at the Golden Horn in İstanbul.¹² Due to the technical difficulties and lack of necessary spares, Naval Air Base, initially, could not duly support the naval operations. However, in 1922, this base began to operate more efficiently. After the foundation of this detachment, Naval Air assets carried out surveillance and reconnaissance missions in coordination with other units, particularly in Ereğli-Akçakoca region. With the involvement of Naval Air assets, naval shipping was organized according to the more precise enemy intelligence reports, thus the effectiveness of naval shipping increased. Amasra Naval Air Base was transferred to İzmit in September 1922.¹³

The *Naval Assistance Organization (Muavenet-i Bahriye Grubu)* was also one of the sublime establishments of the Turkish sailors in the National Struggle period, which worked secretly in a very courageous and challenging manner in İstanbul. Despite the preventive measures and heavy pressure of the occupation forces, the Naval Assistance Organization successfully transported great amounts of military equipment such as; planes, cannons, torpedos and mines from İstanbul to our harbours in the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea in covert methods. This group, surmounting the control mechanisms of the Allied Fleet, helped many navy officers, trained enlisted personal and civilians who desired to take part in the Turkish War of

¹¹ Emrullah Nutku, "Fethiye Deniz Grubu", *Yakın Tarihimiz Dergisi*, Vol. IV, No:48, 24 Ocak 1963, pp.284-285

¹² Polat-Atabey, *Ibid.*, p.60.

¹³ Türk İstiklâl Harbi (Deniz Cephesi ve Hava Harekâtı), Vol. V, p. 32.

Independence to leave İstanbul for Anatolia. Naval Assistance Organization conducted all these activities in close coordination with the officers from the Naval Academy and the Navy.¹⁴

2. NAVAL SHIPPING ACTIVITIES DURING THE TURKISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

During the Turkish War of Independence, there were no other warships apart from Preveze and Aydınreis Gunboats in the inventory of the Anatolian Fleet, which consisted of 37 ships in total (26 in Black Sea¹⁵, 11 in Marmara and Aegean Seas). For that reason, only these two ships were operated with full naval personnel including no civilians. Other vessels were tugboats like Gazal and Alemdar, cargo ships like Şahin, Trabzon, Samsun and Batum, or motorboats like Mebruke, Ayyıldız, İnönü. Some of the personnel of these boats were civilians or retired naval officers.¹⁶ The ships and the other small vessels serving in the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara faced many obstacles; they were old and slow, they were not provided with necessary base support and, perhaps of greater concern, they continuously sailed unescorted. Yet, despite all of these negative conditions, these ships created miracles and maintained the flow of maritime shipping with an innate sense of responsibility, courage and self-sacrifice. In this period, apart from the above-mentioned ships and boats, merchant vessels and steamers were also employed. Steamers belonging to the Ottoman Maritime Lines named Ümit, Bahr-i Cedit, Altay, Gülcemal, Giresun and Akdeniz played a crucial role in transporting almost all kinds of critical materials including weapon systems, particularly from İstanbul to several destinations.

¹⁴ Emrullah Nutku "Muâvenet-i Bahriye Grubu", *Yakın Tarihimiz Dergisi*, Vol.13, 24 May 1962, p. 412.

¹⁵ *Aydınreis and Preveze Gunboats* (French built gunboats, 503 ton with 6-7 kts speed.)

Batum Steamboat (180 ton old and small boat with 5 kts speed, which was confiscated off the coast of Trabzon on 13 March 1921.)

Mebruke Motorgunboat (90 ton boat with 5 kts speed, which was confiscated together with Gazal tugboat on 6 September 1920 in Ereğli.)

Şahin Steamer (850 ton steamer with 7-8 kts speed, which was confiscated in Karadeniz Ereğli on 6 November 1920.)

Ayyıldız Motorboat (120 ton with 6 kts speed, which was confiscated by Aydınreis gunboat on 16 September 1920. Later, it was converted to mine layer.)

Ereğli Motorboat (100 ton with 6-7 kts speed, which was confiscated in Zonguldak on 16 April 1922. She agrounded, and sank on 26 October 1922)

Gazal Tugboat (45 ton with 8 kts speed, which was confiscated in Karadeniz Ereğli on 6 September 1920.)

Alemdar Tugboat (362 ton with 10 kts speed, a heroic ship, which managed to leave İstanbul for joining the Anatolian Fleet in January 1921 under heavy pressure of enemy forces.)

Amasra Motorboat (100 ton with 6-7 kts speed, which was confiscated in Zonguldak on April 16,1922.)

Rüsumat Steamboat Number 4 (85 ton with 6 kts speed, which was joined the Anatolian Fleet in Ereğli on 10 June 1920.)

Samsun Steamboat (2200 ton with 8-10 kts speed, which was confiscated by Gazal tugboat.)

Arslan Motorboat (20 ton with 5 kts speed, on which a Nordan cannon was placed on board.)

Dana Sailboat (200 ton sailing boat which was confiscated on 6 September 1920 by Gazal tugboat.)

Kahraman Sailboat (Small sailing boat)

Fulya Motorboat (A motorboat, which was confiscated on 28 June 1920.)

Trabzon Steamer (950 ton with 6-7 kts speed, which was confiscated on 26 April 1922 by Motorgunboats I and II.)

Şile Sailboat (250 ton, which was confiscated in Sinop on 26 April 1922.)

İkdam Motorboat (20 ton motorboat with 4 kts speed.)

Motorgunboats 1 and 2 (40 ton boats with 20 kts speed, which were obtained from Soviet Russia in September, 1921.)

İnönü Motorboat (49 ton with 4 kts speed, which was confiscated in Sinop on 1 April 1921.)

Figen Atabey, *Karadeniz'de Türk Donanması (Birinci Dünya Harbi ve Milli Mücadele Dönemi)*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2006, p.72.

¹⁶ Mustafa Hergüner, *Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Deniz Şehitlerimiz ve Kahraman Gemilerimiz (Aydınreis ve Preveze Gambotları)*, Deniz İkmal Grup Komutanlığı Basımevi, İstanbul, 2000, p.107.

3. IMPORTANT NAVAL EVENTS DURING THE TURKISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

3.1. The Heroism of the Alemdar Tugboat

Besides the major efforts and sacrifices of the Turkish warships, the heroism of the Alemdar tugboat also constitutes one of the most illustrious sources of pride for Turkish seamanship. Alemdar, despite the forbidding presence of hostile warships, sailed to Ereğli under the pretext of rescue a needy ship in the night of 23 January 1921.¹⁷ Without soon enemy forces was aware of the situation and deployed motorgunboat C-27. Due to heavy pressure and constant firing of enemy motorgunboat C-27, the crew deliberately ran the ship aground. Subsequently seized by the French, the Alemdar's crew heroically managed to re-seize control on 27 January 1921, while the French were making plans to take the ship back to İstanbul.¹⁸ After the intervention of the Turkish crew to retake control, 6 French troops (1 Captain, 5 Enlisted) were captured. Later, Alemdar sailed to Trabzon and gave extraordinary and vital service to the Anatolian Fleet. What is important in this fantastic event is that, the Anatolian Government, for the very first time, used this incident as diplomatic initiative to make some sort of contacts with the French Government. In exchange for letting Alemdar join the Anatolian Fleet, six French prisoners of war were released.¹⁹

3.2. The Confiscation of Cargoship, "Enosis" by the Motorgunboats Number 1 And 2

Motorgunboats Number 1 and 2 were obtained from Russia on 24 September 1921, sailed back to Novorossiysk for major maintenance, due to the technical problems. Having completed their maintenance period which lasted nearly four months, captains of both boats reported on 5 April 1922 that they were ready for any mission.²⁰ Trabzon Naval Shipping Command tasked them with the confiscation of a ship, Enosis, flying Greek flag which was about to leave Novorossiysk for the İstanbul Strait.

In the evening of 26 April 1922, lookouts of the motorgunboats reported that they sighted some black smoke. The boats, which were on high alert, immediately got underway, and came closer to the one-funneled black vessel. In accordance with the relevant international law of war, the one-funneled black vessel was instructed to stop, as it was 35 miles away from the coast sailing towards the İstanbul Strait. Enosis did not follow the instructions, and for that reason, Motorgunboats opened warning fire in front of the ship to give captain a clear message of severe consequences if he disobeyed. After warning fire, the Captain of Enosis had no option, but to accept surrender. The ship was confiscated, and ordered to head for Trabzon.

Commanding officer of Motorgunboat Number 1 made a speech aboard Enosis in which he committed that lives and personnel belongings of crew and passengers would be under the fully protection of the Anatolian Fleet. Two motorgunboats of 40-ton intercepted, seized and confiscated a vessel of 950-ton with nearly 100 crew and passengers. Having arrived in Trabzon on 29 April 1922, she was renamed "Trabzon" in a ceremony in which Turkish flag was hoisted on board. Throughout the Turkish War of Independence, Trabzon supported strategic naval shipping with extremely professional manner with several heroic action, and was one of the most active ships of the Anatolian Fleet.²¹

¹⁷ Nurettin Peker, *Öl, Esir Olma, İstiklâl Savaşı'nda Ereğli, Alemdar Kurtarma Gemisi'nin Kahramanlığı ve Siyasi Neticeleri*, İstanbul, 1966, Çınar Matbaası, p.21.

¹⁸ Fethi Tevetoğlu, "Milli Mücadelede Karadeniz'deki Başlıca Kahramanlık, Alemdar Destanı", *Deniz Kuvvetleri Dergisi*, Ankara, Mart 1989, No: 543, s.6-12.

¹⁹ M.Celaleddin Orhan, *Bir Bahriyelinin Anıları (1914-1981)*, Kaştaş Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p.97.

²⁰ *General Staff Military History Archive*, Box Nu. 1030, File Nu.78, Document Nu.151-1, Paper Nu:40.

²¹ Atabey Ibid., pp.116-117.

3.3. The Confiscation of Cargo Ship "Urania" By Gazal Tugboat

Gazal, a small tugboat, which was under the command of Amasra Naval Command was tasked to patrol between Sulina where the Danube River meets the Black Sea and the İstanbul Strait to confiscate merchant ships in October 1922. While patrolling cautiously not to be detected by enemy warships some 15 miles away from the İstanbul Strait, a medium-size ship with no flag was sighted by the lookouts of the ship. Without any delay, Gazal came closer to the ship. It was understood that it was a 2200-ton Greek merchant ship, Urania. By threatening to destroy Urania with gun fire -in fact, guns were out of order at that time-Captain of Gazal Lieutenant Mehmet Nazmi Bey instructed captain of Urania to change her course towards Ereğli. Bewildered Greek captain could not dare to resist, and declared absolute surrender. What is striking in this matter is the confiscation of a ship of 2200 tons by a small tugboat of 45 tons with almost no offensive capabilities. The confiscated Greek ship was brought to Ereğli on 8 October 1922, and to Amasra on 9 October 1922. Large amount of natural resources were found aboard, such as 2500 tons of timber, and 55 tons of carbon. Greek ship Urania was renamed "Samsun", became a Turkish-flagged vessel, and was put to the structure of Trabzon Naval Shipping Command. Being the largest ship of the Anatolian Fleet, she made extraordinary service till the end of the war.²²

3.4. The Steamboat Rüşumât Number 4

One of the most successful and leading ships of the Anatolian Fleet in the naval part of the Turkish War of Independence was the steamboat Rüşumât Number 4. On 19 July 1921 lying at anchor in Ordu, Rüşumât was discovered by a Greek destroyer and nearby light Greek cruiser. For the fear of sinking with enemy fire, the ship was deliberately stranded, and the bow of ship was set on fire.²³ Having seen burning Rüşumât, Greek warships decided to continue their routine patrol without any action against Rüşumât. When Greek naval vessels disappeared, the fire was extinguished with the help of local people, and Rüşumât headed for Batumi for maintenance. After the repairment, on 29 September 1921, during a routine shipping mission, having unloaded its cargo in Samsun, Rüşumât came across the same Greek destroyer and light cruiser off the coast of Görele near Eynesil Village. As soon as Rüşumât discovered the Greek warships, captain immediately altered the course, and intentionally headed for shore to be agrounded. Having been stranded, Captain ordered crew to abandon the ship due to intensive enemy artillery firing.²⁴ Enemy warships fired nearly 40 rounds in half an hour at Rüşumât, five of which made a direct hit causing severe damage. After the Greek ships left, a recovery tugboat was sent to recover Rüşumât. But, on 14 October 1921, the Greek ships targetted again at Rüşumât with heavy artillery fire. With additional nine direct hits, ship was almost completely damaged. After due consideration, it was decided that Rüşumât could no longer be employed for logistic duties. However, some major parts in good shape were dismantled to be used for other purposes. Being the only loss of the Anatolian Fleet during the Turkish War of Independence with enemy action, Rüşumât managed, almost without interruption, to transfer all sort of war materials to several Black Sea ports until October 1921.

3.5. The Şahin Steamer

The Şahin Steamer played an indispensable role in strategic shipping through the Black Sea during the Turkish War of Independence. Before the Kütahya and Eskişehir Battles, she transported soldiers, ammunition and animals of the 3rd Caucasian Division from Trabzon to

²² Atabey, *Ibid.*, pp.118-119.

²³ Orhan, *Ibid.*, p.156.

²⁴ *Türk İstiklal Harbi (Deniz Cephesi ve Hava Harekâtı)*, *Ibid.*, Vol.V, p.43.

İnebolu as well as Akçakoca for the reinforcement of the Western Front between 20 and 25 May 1921. One of the most important tasks of Şahin was to transport 29 planes from Novorossiysk to Trabzon. National Government procured these aircraft from Germany. Firstly, they were sent to St. Petersburg, and later transferred to Novorossiysk by railway in July 1922. Transportation of the main parts of these 29 aircraft on board Şahin, an aged and outdated ship, has been a real challenge, even a legend. Captain of Şahin, Cevat Bey performed his duty under extremely difficult circumstances waiting for the storms to break out to get underway assessing enemy patrol ships would remain at harbour in stormy weathers. Şahin conducted two highly challenging mission to transfer main parts of 29 planes to Turkey. These aircraft were employed in the Turkish War of Independence. Şahin was also tasked to transport flammable substances like oil, engine oil, gasoil from Batumi to several Turkish Black Sea ports. This heroic ship, unfortunately, sank off the coast of Amasra due to an unexpected storm on 26 October 1922 while on a logistic deployment at the Black Sea.²⁵

CONCLUSION

In the period of the occupation after the Mondros Armistice, the old and outdated ships and boats whose tonnage was approximately 7000 carried nearly 300.000 tons of war materials, 220.000 tons of which from Soviet Russian ports to the Turkish ports in the Black Sea with the enormous sacrifices of few naval officers and the Turkish shipmen. The total amount of the materials transported through the seas by the Turkish naval personnel during the Turkish War of Independence was figured out by a special Naval Delegation particularly dedicated to collect this information. This special investigation took place in the Dolmabahçe Palace by using official documents in 1937.²⁶ Given the other regions, which engaged in naval shipping, we can easily claim that the amount of strategic material transported was nearly 300.000 tons. Another point worth emphasizing is the plain fact that, due to very adverse circumstances, it was almost impossible for the Turkish Sailors to enlist all the materials they transported. These critical materials were planes, cannons, rifles, heavy machine guns, bayonets, all kinds of ammunition and other important war supplies. In conclusion naval operation in the Turkish War of Independence yielded miraculous results because of the perfect management of the naval organization established under the command of Naval Department Directorate. It is not an exaggeration to claim that but for those critical materials, it would almost be impossible to end up with an absolute victory against enemy forces. After the Turkish War of Independence resulted in an absolute victory, Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK gave an address about the achievements of the Turkish Sailors in the period of National Struggle, in a speech on March 1, 1923, on the opening of 4th Session Year in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in which he expressed followings:²⁷

“Despite the enemy’s naval blockade and the inadequate maritime vehicles, our naval personnel created miracles with a small number of ships, sustaining maritime shipping, almost without any losses, which certainly deserves highly commendation”.

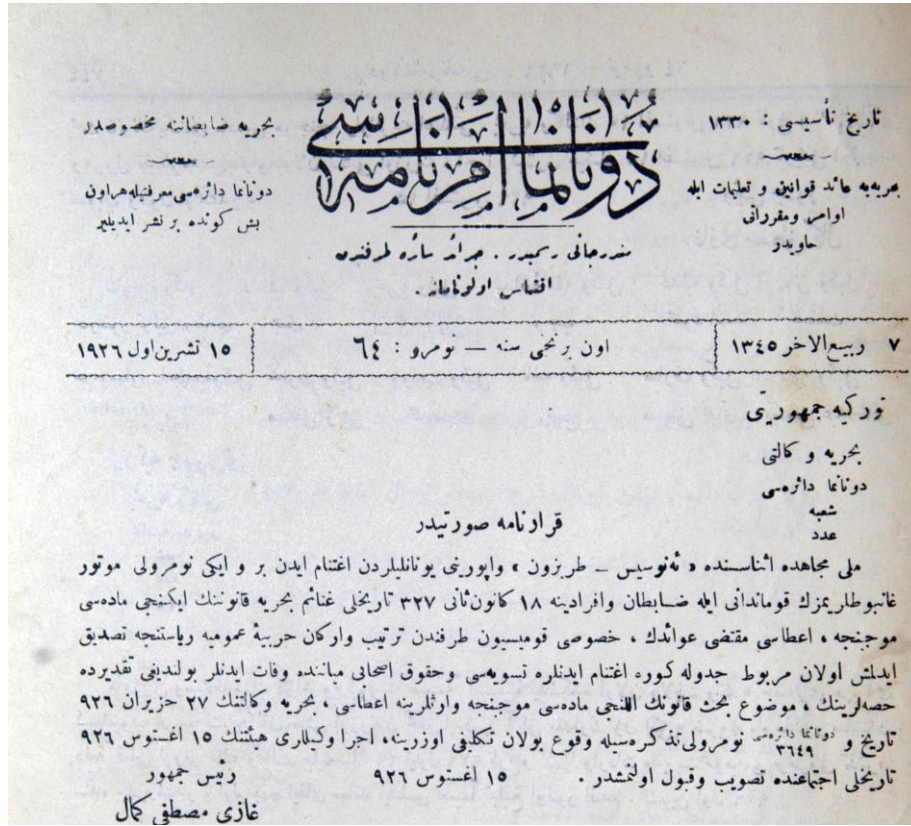
²⁵ Büyüktuğrul, Ibid., Vol.V, s.163.

²⁶Nahit Çapaner, “Kurtuluş Savaşı’nın Deniz Kahramanları”, *the appendix of Deniz Mecmuası*, Nu. 368, Deniz Matbaası, İstanbul, 1943, p.15.

²⁷ T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, Vol. XXVIII, Period.I, T.B.M.M. Matbaası , Ankara, 1961, p.15.

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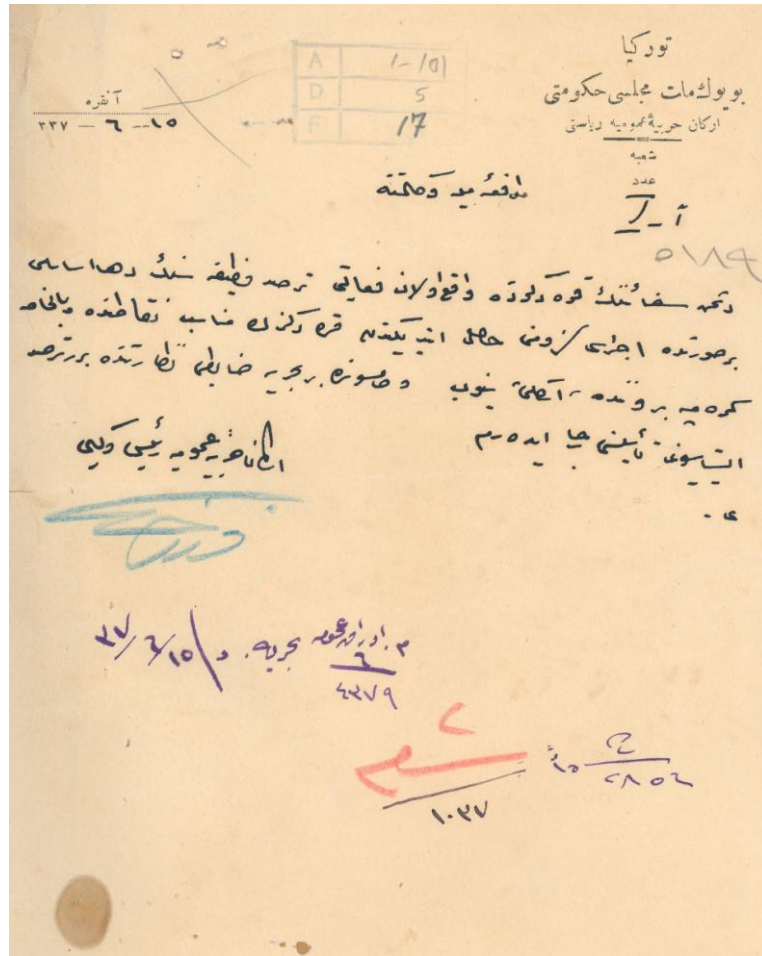
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Appendix I: Replica Of The Decree²⁸

It was decided, agreed and ratified that the commanding officers, officers, enlisted personnel and conscripts of Motorgunboats Number 1 and 2 be honoured with a special money reward in accordance with the relevant Naval Law of Contraband item number 2, dated 31 January 1912 for their direct involvement in the confiscation of Enosis merchant ship (later renamed Trabzon) flying Greek flag during the War of Independence. The amount of the money to be rewarded will be granted to the right holders according to a particular list of Navy veterans in the appendix that was prepared by a special commission, and approved by Turkish General Staff. For those who passed away, their rights will be channeled into their legal heirs in accordance with the 50th item of the same Law, based on the official proposal of the Fleet Division of Naval Ministry issue number 3649 dated 27 June 1926, and approved by Council of Ministers on the Ministerial Meeting of 15 August 1926.

Gazi Mustafa Kemal
President

²⁸ *Donanma Mecmuası*, Nu.64, September 1926.

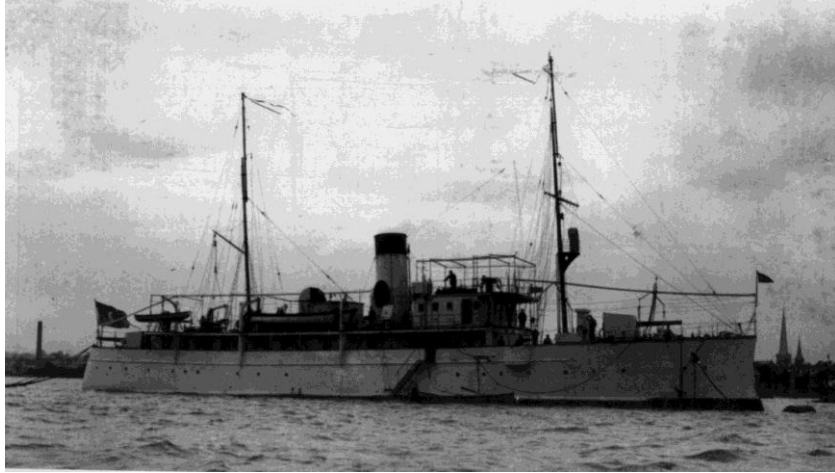
Appendix 2: A Document About the Foundation of Coastal Surveillance Stations²⁹

Ankara 15/06/337 (1921) Grand National Assembly Government
 Turkish General Staff
 To the Ministry of National Defense

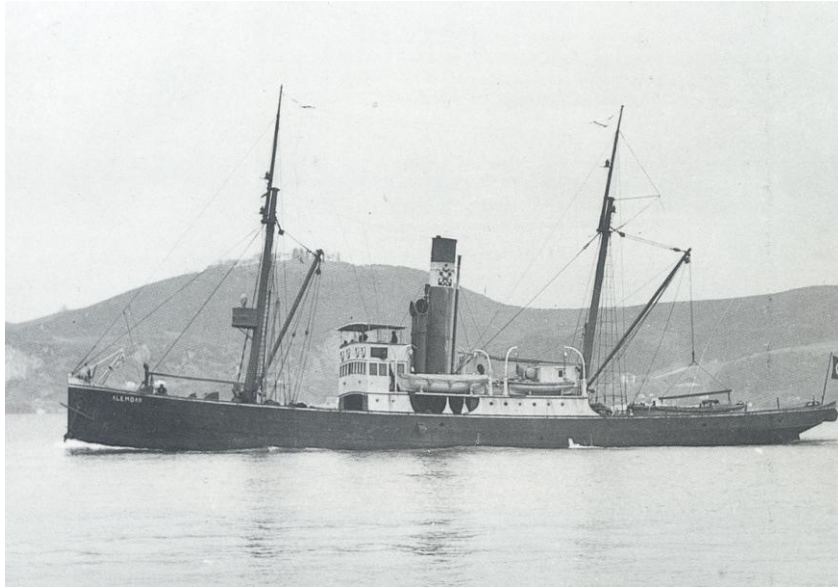
Because of the strong necessity to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance mission for detecting and tracking enemy ships in the Black Sea more effectively, I highly request the foundation of the Coastal Surveillance Stations in the suitable places in the Black Sea and particularly in Kerempe Cape, Ereğli, Sinop and Samsun under the supervision of a navy officer.

²⁹ General Staff Military Archive, Independence War Collection, Box Nu. 63, Document Nu. 8, Paper Nu.17.

Appendix 3: Photographs Belonging to the Anatolian Fleet³⁰



Aydinreis Gunboat



Alemdar Tugboat

³⁰ Atabey, *Ibid.*, pp.158-160.



Gazal Tugboat



Motorgunboats Number 1 and 2



The Şahin Steamer