



*Embassy of Greece
Defense Section*

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WW II/Battle of Crete 20-30 May 1941
by
Brigadier General Ilias Leontaris,
Defense Attache of Greece in Washington, DC

Dear

Members of the AHI board,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you for being here today,

I thank the AHI for the invitation to be the speaker today on this topic that represents a very specific and important moment of the Hellenic History and let me also thank my friend Nick Larigakis for his kind introduction.

It is an honor for me to be with you today and as I am standing at this podium, where very important people have been before me, I feel the burden on my shoulders and I will try to meet your expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I cannot estimate how much time someone needs in order to speak about and to cover all the aspects involved in the Battle of Crete.

What I am going to do today and within the time frame we have, is to offer you selective information concerning the strategic importance of the Island, the political situation prior to the battle, a summary of the 11-day operations, the outcome of the battle and its impact on the next phase of the WW II.

Let me start with this,

In JULY 1941, two months after the fall of Crete, General Kurt Student, the German Airborne leader, was summoned to Hitler's headquarters at Wolfschanze.

Together with a number of senior paratroop officers who had survived the Crete battle, he was awarded the Cross of the Knight.

The Fuhrer congratulated the Airborne warriors on accomplishing a vital task by the only method possible to be used for the operation "MERCURY" under the circumstances? Airborne Assault.

This was encouraging talk for General Student.

His Airborne Corps was already nearly back up to strength, the many casualties had been replaced and equipment losses were recovered too.

Andhe had ambitious plans for further operations in the Mediterranean against Cyprus, Egypt, and Malta.

But..... after lunch, over coffee, Hitler shattered his hopes.

Turning to General Student, the Fuhrer said quietly: ***"Of course, General you know that after Crete we shall never do another Airborne operation. The parachute arm is one that relies entirely on surprise. That surprise factor has now exhausted itself.....the day of the Paratroops is over"***.

Having said that let me move to

The geostrategic context

▶ Crete, the largest of the Greek islands, is strategically situated in the eastern Mediterranean

▶ It controls the air and sea approaches to Libya and Egypt. "Suda" bay in Crete is one of the largest natural harbors in the eastern Mediterranean (still today is one of the anchorages of the u.s. 6th Mediterranean fleet).

The historical and political context before the German invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia

Greece, had

- successfully resisted the military invasion of fascist Italy since October 28, 1940 and counterattacked deeply into Albania.
- permitted British forces to establish a military presence on Crete since the outbreak of hostilities with Italy (royal navy, royal air force, army units).
- welcomed British assistance (April 1939 British guarantee), but did not permit the small RAF bomber force in Greece to threaten the Romanian oil fields at Ploesti supplying Nazi Germany. Greece hoped for continuing German “neutrality.”

Great Britain

- Great Britain deemed Crete essential for the security of British lines of communication in the eastern Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal in Egypt.
- British forces were successful in defeating the Italian attempt to invade Egypt from Libya (September 1940). The British counterattack advanced 500 miles into Libya decimating the Italian ground forces by February 1941 (130,000 Italian prisoners).
- the entry of German troops into the Balkans (Romania, October 1940 – 12 divisions) obliged Britain to split its limited resources in north Africa for reinforcing Greece.
- Winston Churchill, British prime minister, still hoped that certain countries in the Balkans (Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey) would resist Nazi Germany with British help (Turkey did not oblige).

Germany

- on December 5, 1940 Adolph Hitler decided to strike the USSR (operation Barbarossa)
- in order to safeguard its Balkan “flank” and the Ploesti oil fields against the threat of British air bases in Greece, the directive for the attack against Greece (operation “Marita”) was issued on December 13, 1940.

- in January-February 1941 an air fleet of the Luftwaffe moved into Sicily and elements of the Africa corps under General Erwin Rommel arrived in Libya and commenced operations against the British forces in North Africa.
- on March 1, 1941 strong German ground forces moved into Bulgaria from Romania.

The German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece

The common Greek-British defense

- a British Commonwealth expeditionary force started landing in Greece on March 7, 1941 (approx. 58,000 - 65,000 men). This force lacked sufficient and modern armor, anti-aircraft artillery, and air support. Total RAF and royal Hellenic Air Force combat aircraft numbered about 150-200 at the start of the German invasion.
- the major combat units of the Hellenic army were concentrated on the Albanian front where they had just defeated a major Italian spring offensive (12,000 Italians dead and wounded, 1,800 Greek casualties). Only 2nd line units were available to defend the Greek northern frontiers, and the Greek units in Albania could not easily disengage from the Italian forces due to lack of motor transport (Hellenic Armed Forces peak of 300,000 men).
- although the British command hoped that the Greek forces would abandon Macedonia and western Thrace to the Germans and coordinate a defense on a narrower front (Aliakmon line), the Greek government refused to do so since it was hoped that the Yugoslavs would resist and delay a German advance to the Greek-Yugoslav borders. The Greek-Bulgarian border was partially defended by a line of fixed fortifications, the Metaxas line (essentially a well-constructed mini Maginot line).
- Yugoslavia was politically divided. A part of the government formally allied itself with Nazi Germany but a coup brought the country back into the fold of the allies. Germany rapidly reoriented its forces for an attack against Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia utterly failed to timely mobilize its 1,000,000 strong army.

- the German armies in the Balkans enjoyed overwhelming superiority in personnel and equipment numbers and quality (700,000-850,000 troops, including no less than seven armored divisions, and supported by approximately 1,000-1,500 combat aircraft).

The German attack

- The German attack against Yugoslavia and Greece commenced on April 6, 1941, Palm Sunday for the eastern Greek and Serb orthodox Christians.
- The Hellenic Army was in full alert when the German attack uncoiled from Bulgaria.
- The Yugoslav defenses had collapsed by April 17, 1941. Many Croatian, Slovenian and Bosnian formations did not even resist the German onslaught.
- The Greek Metaxas line fortifications fiercely resisted the German attacks. The Greek defenses were penetrated or outflanked through the Greek-Yugoslav frontier. On April 9, 1941 the Germans entered Thesaloniki. The Greek forces in Albania were obliged to start retreating on April 12, 1941.
- German flanking movements and air superiority forced the British expeditionary force to a fighting withdrawal from continental Greece. By April 24, 1941 50,662 British Commonwealth troops were departing for Crete or Egypt under the constant bombardment of the Luftwaffe. These units had lost most of their heavy equipment, i.e., artillery, armored and transport vehicles, anti-aircraft guns, communications gear.
- The Greek government along with surviving royal Hellenic Navy and Royal Hellenic Air Force units also left Greece to continue in exile the fight on the side of the allies. On April 27, 1941, the German armies entered Athens and raised the Nazi swastika on the rock of the acropolis.

The Battle of Crete

Preparations

Strategic assumptions, intelligence, and planning

- Hitler approved the German airborne invasion of Crete (operation Mercury) on April 21-25, 1941. The German 7th parachute division (part of the Luftwaffe – German Air Force – and not of the Wehrmacht) commenced its movement to Greece.
- The capture of Crete would safeguard the German flank in the Balkans during the upcoming German invasion of the USSR
- Crete could become the springboard of German operations in the Middle East (the pro-Axis and German-supported Iraqi military revolt against the British started on May 23, 1941 – three days after the German attack against Crete).
- The Germans held the misconception that because the Cretans in their majority were liberal democrats (Venizelists) and opposed to the Greek royal family and the Greek rightist government, they would “welcome” the German invasion forces with “open arms.” This misconception proved fatal since it excluded from the operational planning the local Cretan population as an “opposing force.” More seriously, it ignored German strategic intelligence documents that had been prepared prior to the invasion of Greece warning of the propensity of the Cretans to fight foreign invaders and that they were accustomed to owning and using firearms. (Although Modern Greek laws largely prohibit personal ownership of firearms, Cretans still possess weapons of various types, including military automatic assault rifles.)
- The Germans largely relied on tactical intelligence for their planning (air reconnaissance). This proved to be highly inaccurate since it failed to disclose the defensive positions of the allies on the island, e.g., slit trenches camouflaged inside olive groves. This also seriously underestimated the numerical strength of the allied defense forces.

- German photo reconnaissance did not disclose the hilly terrain of Crete.
- Two German airborne divisions were deemed to be sufficient for the operation while a division of mountain troops was kept in reserve (it was committed to battle).
- German planning called for the capture of three (3) airfields during the first day of attack (Maleme – Western attack group “COMET”; Rethymno-Central attack group “MARSH” or “ARIS”; and Heraklion – East attack group “ORION”). German General Kurt Student, a veteran of the German airborne invasion of Holland, was the architect of the German plan.
- The strategic and tactical intelligence of the allies was excellent.
 - “ultra” intercepted and decoded German electronic transmissions provided a steady stream of updates on German intentions and preparations. For example, by May 5, 1941 the allied force on Crete knew that German preparations for the invasion would be finalized by May 17, 1941.
 - allied intelligence networks with wireless transmitters already operated in occupied Greece where the German airborne invasion troops and aircraft assembled. The German staff planning meetings at hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens was monitored by members of the Greek resistance movement.

To gain some time, I am going to skip the reference to the opposing forces and the equipment in numbers. However, I should provide you with information coming out from the analysis and the comparison of the forces.

- **The allied forces in Crete, were equipped with**

- insufficient infantry weapons for personal defense, e.g., crews of anti-aircraft artillery batteries only had pistols but not rifles or light machine guns.

- Insufficient number of light (40 mm Bofors) and heavy (3.5 in) anti-aircraft guns.

- Mix of field artillery including captured Italian and old French 75 mm pieces.

- Only 23 light and “infantry” tanks in less than desirable mechanical condition.

- Insufficient motor transport and communications gear (wireless sets).

- **the Hellenic Army units on Crete were equipped with**

no less than five (5) types of rifles (the royal gendarmerie had American-made rifles).

Some units had only 15-20 rounds per rifle.

A regiment had only 4-5 French-made “Saint-Etienne” 8 mm machine guns with enough ammunition for 3-4 minutes of continuous fire.

Rifle (e.g., 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano) ammunition was not interchangeable with the available machine guns (8 mm Hotchkiss & “St-Etienne”) or with the typical British 7.70 mm (0.303 caliber) rifle and machine gun ammunition.

- *The good thing was that despite the German command of the air and the casualties inflicted on incoming transport ships, the flow of supplies from Egypt to Crete was not interrupted.*

Coming now to the

- **Unit and Command characteristics**

- the German paratroop and mountain troop units were battle-hardened elite units, with victories in previous campaigns, and a high degree of *ELAN*.

- the commanders of these German elite formations were decisive and adaptable to changing tactical situations. They had previous experience in mobile warfare (blitz krieg).
- Some British units that arrived on the island from Greece fully equipped with their infantry weapons had to leave them at the disembarkation points so that totally unarmed units could get some weapons.
- British Commonwealth unit cohesion suffered because certain formations were composed of elements from units that had dissolved during the campaign in Greece.
- Hellenic army and royal gendarmerie units were placed under British command (language problems and lack of joint training with British Commonwealth formations).
- British Commonwealth ground forces commanders mostly were regular line officers and reservists accustomed to regular infantry tactics. General Freyberg, a New Zealander, was a WWI war hero.
- The local Cretan population had an excellent historical tradition of unorthodox guerilla warfare (e.g., Ottoman Turks, Cretan participation in Greek Macedonian struggle prior to the 1912-1913 Balkan wars).

The battle

- the preparatory Luftwaffe air raids did not cause material damage to the defensive works and the personnel manning them. The allied anti-aircraft artillery avoided firing against Luftwaffe formations and evaded suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD) attacks.

- the actual attack was launched on May 20, 1941.
- the German airborne landings were preceded by a fierce aerial bombardment of various targets across the island that included cities, towns and villages. Luftwaffe avoided cratering airfields that the German forces intended to capture.
- the commander of the German paratroop division was killed en route to Crete when his towed glider crashed in the island of Aegina outside Athens due to wing failure while avoiding a mid-air collision with a Luftwaffe bomber.
- Glider and paratroop formations missed their landing sites when their transport aircraft tried to avoid anti-aircraft artillery concentrations. German paratroop and airborne units literally landed on top of organized defended sites and were cut to pieces. Landed German gliders were even fired upon by 40 mm Bofors a/a guns acting as ground artillery in direct fire role. (Maleme).
- German glider airborne units became separated and disorganized because of the hilly terrain. Unit assembly and coordinated attacks against assigned objectives became difficult and caused many casualties. (Maleme).
- the local population joined the fighting with suicidal bravery. Cretan men and women of all ages armed with agricultural implements and ancient flintlock rifles killed German paratroopers and turned captured German weapons against their former owners. The Cretans did not have problems figuring out how to use German Mauser rifles and mp40 submachine guns.
- despite the losses of German field unit commanders, the remaining officers of the German paratroop and glider-borne units showed initiative and imagination in overcoming adversity – trademarks of elite airborne forces. In typical German fashion, remnants of units were consolidated and organized into new battle groups.
- by the end of the first day (May 20, 1941):

■ the German airborne forces had failed to capture the critical airfield **at Maleme and hill 107** dominating its defense. Despite their severe casualties the surviving German units continued to press the attack. Although the New Zealand defenders were still holding at the airfield and on hill 107, their commander was losing communications with his units and HQs and lacked a coherent understanding of the battle. A counterattack supported by two British Matilda tanks failed.

■ the German airborne forces had partial success in the area of the prison valley east of Maleme. The Hellenic army 8th regiment despite its lack of weapons threw back the attacking paratroop engineer battalion with the help of civilians. The 6th Hellenic army regiment dissolved after short resistance. The Germans occupied the existing prison complex buildings. New Zealand and Australian forces stabilized the defensive lines in the Galatas area.

■ in the afternoon German airborne landings at Rethymno and Heraklion were repulsed and the German forces suffered severe casualties. In Rethymno, Australian Lt. Colonel Ian Campbell immediately deployed his reserves and counterattacked the already disrupted German forces. The Australian defenders were assisted by both Cretan gendarmerie and Hellenic army units. In Rethymno German ju 52 transports fell victim to a/a guns and infantry weapons. German units attempting to occupy the airport fell victim to a combined British-Australian force. German paratroopers who came down near Heraklion were shot down by Hellenic army soldiers and knifed by Cretan civilians who then armed themselves with German weapons.

■ the German airborne forces had approximately 2,000 troops killed.

■ during the night of may 20-21, 1941, the commanding officer of the new Zealanders at Maleme withdrew his forces from hill 107 and the airport. Hill 107 was occupied by twenty (20) German paratroopers commanded by a German military

doctor. *This proved to be the turning point of the whole battle of Crete.*

- the allied forces failed to commit their reserves to launch comprehensive counter attacks while the Germans believed that they were losing the battle.

- **second day (May 21, 1941)**

- German paratroop general student decided to commit his mountain division reserve to the battle. After carrying a successful test landing of a ju-52 at the edge of the Maleme airfield, a coordinated operation was put into motion to land the German mountain division at Maleme. Although the German paratroops who were dropped to provide a screen were massacred, the ju-52 transports soon established a shuttle service to Maleme despite their losses from mishaps and occasional defensive fire.

- the German night attempt to carry out a seabornelanding at Crete failed miserably. Thanks to advance intelligence,royal navy cruiser – destroyer formation intercepted twoGerman mountain troop formations on greek caiques (fishing boats) escorted by the Italian light destroyer LUPO. Despite *LUPO's* brave action, these flotillas were destroyed with 397 Germans killed at a point between the greek island of Milos and Crete.

- **third day (may 22, 1941) – disaster strikes the defenders of Crete**

- during the royal navy daylight withdrawal from the area, a number of British destroyers and cruisers were attacked by the Luftwaffe and sunk. The British battleship *Warspite* (a WW I veteran) was damaged. HMS *kelly* commanded by Lord Louis Mountbatten, later admiral and viceroy of India, was one of the ships sunk (this episode was portrayed in the British war movie “in which we serve”).

- the royal navy suffered dearly from Luftwaffe attacks in the waters around Crete because:

- lack of friendly air cover.
 - inadequate and badly installed a/a armament, e.g., HMS Kelly's multiple barrel pom-pom 40 mm gun had confined fields of fire.
 - wrong principle for a/a fire control directors. The royal navy relied on a goniometric solution. A/a ammunition was expended without success. The u.s., German, and Japanese navies relied on tachymetric a/a fire control directors.

- a half-hearted counterattack by British Commonwealth forces against the German-occupied Maleme airfield failed. General Freyberg had not committed all of his available reserves to the counterattack. The Germans continued the undisturbed air shuttle reinforcement of their forces at Maleme. General Freyberg ordered a general withdrawal (loss of the battle of Crete for the allies).

- a German paratroop attack at the cemetery hill, Galatas area, was beaten back by greek troops who counter attacked with fixed bayonets and the battle cry "AERA" ("wind") under the command of a British officer. Cretan civilian men and women joined this counter attack.

- **Battle of Galatas and withdrawal (may 23-27, 1941)**
 - the gradual arrival of the German mountain division and the German command of the air gradually pushed allied forces along the northern coastal road of Crete. Galatas fell on may 25, 1941 but not before a spectacular counter attack by the new Zealanders into the town with fixed bayonet.

 - on may 26, 1941, General Freyberg formally signaled the allied command HQs in Cairo, Egypt, that the British Commonwealth forces needed to evacuate Crete.

 - the withdrawal of the British Commonwealth forces was covered by the Hellenic Army 8th regiment. The Greek 8th Regiment resisted repeated German attacks at the Alikianos area. It ceased being a fighting force on may 27, 1941.

- on May 23, 1941, the German military command angered by the resistance of the Cretan population and wanting to believe that the decaying corpses of fallen German paratroopers had been “mutilated” by the Cretan defenders, authorized the taking of hostages and their execution.
- the Hellenic army 1st regiment defended Kastelli for four days despite continuous German attacks and Luftwaffe bombardment. After the fall of the town on May 27, 1941,, 201 Cretan civilians were rounded up by the Germans and summarily shot.
- on May 26-27, 1941, the British Commando Units of Laycock force (Layforce) arrived in Crete in order to cover the evacuation of the British Commonwealth forces. Layforce included French and Spanish republican commandos. Although trained in unorthodox warfare, these units were used as a regular infantry rearguard.
- **Evacuation (May 27-June 1, 1941)**
 - the Royal Navy selected to approach Crete for evacuations only during night time hours since the Luftwaffe enjoyed complete command of the air. Evacuations from ports in northern Crete had to traverse the notorious Kasos straits near the Italian-occupied Dodecanese islands during daylight hours.
 - during the night of May 28-29, 1941, 3,486 British Commonwealth troops at Heraklion (no allowance had been made for Greek troops), embarked on two royal navy cruisers and six destroyers. Subsequent Luftwaffe bombardment of the evacuation flotilla killed approximately 360 men among the evacuees, seriously damaged the two cruisers and resulted in the loss of two destroyers.
 - Rethymno fell to the Germans on May 29, 1941. Most of the defenders surrendered. Broken communications did not manage to order the defending contingent to withdraw

towards Sfakia, the designated port of embarkation in south Crete.

- on May 29, 1941, over 6,000 British Commonwealth troops evacuated Crete from Sfakia on board four cruisers (one Australian), three destroyers, and a fast landing ship.
- on May 30, 1941, General Freyberg and his staff left from Sfakia in two royal air force Sunderland flying boats.
- the Royal Navy continued with the evacuations from Sfakia until June 1, 1941. 5,000 British Commonwealth troops were left in Sfakia. Due to a breakdown of order at the embarkation points, the Australian rearguard covering the evacuation did not board the evacuation vessels and became prisoners of the Germans.
- the Italians carried out unopposed landings in western Crete on may 28, 1941.

Referring to casualties you may see different numbers, depending on who is the author of the paper. However the losses were high enough and I will give you some numbers.

► **Strategic impact of the battle for Greece and Crete**

- the German invasion of the Soviet Union was delayed for a crucial period of 58 days. The impact of this delay was felt during the failed German advance on Moscow in 1941.
- the German paratroop corps was decimated. It never undertook another airborne offensive operation during ww ii. The cost of the German attack on Crete deterred the German high command from launching a similar operation against Malta. Malta placed a stranglehold on axis communications between Italy and North Africa.
- the Luftwaffe's loss of 117 Junkers 52 transport aircraft (may 20-june 1, 1941) was felt when the German high command

attempted to resupply the encircled German troops of General von Paulus during the battle of Stalingrad in 1942. German industry had not managed to replace the JU 52 aircraft that were lost during “operation mercury.”

- *Germany was unable to effectively assist the anti-British military revolt in Iraq.*

- Major Axis military formations were tied down in static defense and counter-guerilla operations both in Greece and Crete. These formations were not able to participate in the axis defense against allied landings in Sicily and Italy in 1943.

▶ **Crete – occupation, resistance, liberation**

- following the fall of Crete to the Germans a number of British Commonwealth troops were secreted by the Cretan population and later evacuated to Egypt aboard Royal Navy and Royal Hellenic Navy submarines and small surface vessels with the assistance of the Cretan resistance movement.

- the Cretan resistance movement and allied commando teams continued to harass the German occupation forces after the fall of Crete to the Germans with the assistance of the local population. Numerous acts of sabotage were committed against axis airfields.

- the German occupation forces responded with the usual atrocities against civilians and with the destruction of whole villages, e.g., Kandanos, executions at Kondomari photographed by a German soldier, etc.

- in April 1944 a mixed British – Greek commando team under Leigh Fermor kidnapped German Major General Heinrich Kreipe and spirited him to Egypt with the assistance of the Cretan resistance on board a royal navy motor launch.

- the last German troops on Crete, cut off from the German withdrawal from Greece in September – October 1944, were disarmed in May 1945.

The battle of Crete along with the general contribution of Greece to WW II and the resistance against the Italian, German and Bulgarian occupied forces enforced Leaders around the world, to include Hitler his self, to make statements which express the gratitude and admiration to Greece and the Greeks, like the ones which follow:

1. “Thanks to the historical truth I should confirm that only the Greeks, from the all opponents that faced us, fought with bigger courage and outstare the death.”

Adolph Hitler (From his speech in Reichstag on 4 May 1941)

2. “the word heroism I am afraid that it does not attribute in minimal the action of self-sacrifice of Greeks, that was the decisive factor for the victorious result of common effort of nations, during the WW II, for the human freedom and the dignity. If it were not the bravery of Greeks and their courage, the result of WW II would be indefinable. “

Winston Churchill (Paraphrased from his speeches in the British Parliament on 24 April 1941)

3. Up to now we got used to say that the Greeks fight as heroes. Now we will say: The heroes fight as Greeks.

“Winston Churchill (From a speech in the BBC in the first days of Greek-Italian war)

4. “I am sorry because I age(getting older) and I will not live a lot in order to thank the Greeks, that their resistance was decisive for the WW II.”

Joseph Stalin (From a speech in the radio station of Moscow on 31 January 1943 after the victory of Stalingrad and the capitulation of 6th German army under the General Von Paulus).

5. “If Russians succeeded to resist in the entry of Moscow, in order to deter and stop German torrent, they owe it to the Greeks, because they delayed the German divisions, at the time when they (Germans) could make us kneel.”
.....

Georgy Constantinovich Zhoukov (General of Soviet army: Extract his memoirs for the WW II).

6. “Independent from what the future historians will say, what we can say now, is that Greece gave to Mussolini an unforgettable course/lesson, and it was the motive for the revolution in Yugoslavia, it kept the Germans in the continental country and in Crete for six weeks, it reversed the chronological line of all drawings of German Supreme Command and brought a general inversion of the entire course of the war and finally the victory.” Sir Robert Antony Eden Minister of War and Abroad of Great Britain 1940-1945,

Prime Minister of Great Britain 1955-1957 - paraphrase by his speech in British Parliament 24/09/1942)

7. “It would not be exaggeration saying that Greece upset the entire plans of Germany and forced her to postpone the campaign to Russia for six weeks. We wonder what it would be the Soviet Union without Greece. “

Sir Harold Leofric George Alexander (British General at the duration of B' [PP] - paraphrase by his speech in the British Parliament on 28 October 1941)

8. “I am incompetent to give the suitable breadth of gratitude that feel for the brave resistance of population and leaders of Greece.”

Charles de Gaul (From his speech in the French Parliament after the end of WW II).

9. “Greece is the symbol of the tortured and bleeding but still alive Europe. It was never a defeat so much honorable for those that suffered it.“

Maurice Schumann Minister of Abroads of France 1969-1973, member of French academy 1974 (From a message that was addressed from the BBC of London to the slave populations of Europe on 28 April 1941, the day where Hitler occupied Athens after six months war against Mussolini and six weeks against Hitler).

10. “You fought unarmed and overcame, small against big. We owe our gratitude to you, because you gave us the time to defend our homeland. As Russian and as persons we thank you. “

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Moscow, radio station when attacked Hitler in the USSR

11. “The war against Greece proved that nothing is guaranteed in the military operations and we have to expect surprises always.”

Benito Mussolini (By speech the 10/5/1941)

12. “On 28th October 1940, Greece received a three hour deadline in order to decide between Peace or War. Even if it was given three days or three weeks or three years, the answer would be the same. The Greeks taught dignity throughout the centuries.

When all world lost its hope, Greeks dared to dispute the undefeated German beast, raising against it their proud spirit of freedom. “

Franklin D Roosevelt, President of the USA 1933 – 1945

13. The heroic effort of Greeks... Against the attack of Germany, having defeated so vastly the Italians in their effort to invade the Greek soil, filled the hearts of Americans with enthusiasm and moved them with sympathy.

Franklin D Roosevelt, President of the USA 1933 – 1945

14. *A German officer of Luftwaffe declared in the Commander of the Group of Divisions of Eastern Macedonia, Major General Dedes, that the Greek Army was the first army in which the fighting planes Stuka did not cause the panic.*

“Your soldiers” it said, “instead of panicky escape, as soldiers did in France and in Poland, they shot us from their places.”

and to conclude my speech with what AESCHYLUS had said thousands of years ago.

15. “Because only we (the Greeks), on the contrary to the barbarians, never measured the enemy in the battle “

AESCHYLUS, Father of tragedy)

Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you for your attention,

I am your disposal for comments, remarks or questions.

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