

The role of the Australian Military Establishment in Greece in 1941

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Abstract:

The study is included four axes, The first axis is clarified an overview of the roots of Greek-Australian relations until 1941, these relations date back to 1829, when seven Greek sailors emigrated, they convicted of piracy by the British Naval Court, they were sentenced to be deported to New South Wales Southeastern Australia, at the official level in 1926, they did not have political relations deserved to studying and research according to the viewpoint of the author, but they had economic relations that became more effective during the years (1937-1940), the second axis discussed the circumstances of sending Australian troops to Greece, its political and military consequences. The British government had motivated Australian Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies to send Australian troop to Greece, the Australian government promised to send more troops to Greece as well, and justified that to delay Hitler's planned attack on the Soviet Union, but the British government was not honest with the Australian government, the Australian prime minister blamed Australian forces commander Thomas Blame the last blamed the Australian government and the Australian press showed that the Australian government did not have detailed information before sending troops.

The third axis followed the problems which faced by the Australian forces in Greece, the most important of which were not the loyalties of the Greek officers united towards the political class, moreover, the equipping of the Greek army and air force was French, Czech and Polish weapons completely incompatible with British equipment, in the event of fighting, these weapons are subject to rapid depletion and Greece was not prepared to buy or recycle weapons from the mentioned countries, so, it is obliged to independent on British weapons and then the total dependence on the Australian forces in addition to not informing the Australian government on the details of the intelligence work of the Allies, the fourth section studied the lack of coordination between the Australian and Greek forces at the end of the campaign. More than once, the Greek forces refused to cooperate with the Australian forces on the ground, as well as the moral collapse of some Greek troops and ended the campaign with the occupation of German troops in Greece in 1941, and the Australians lost three thousand Australian soldiers, most of whom became prisoners of war with the Germans.

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Introduction

World War II is a fertile field for academic research and studies, especially since quite a few topics need to be studied, including the role of the Australian military establishment in Greece in 1941, The focusing was on the subject of the study, so necessitated scientific necessity to study it and the details of the circumstances of sending Australian troops, the places where they fought in Greece, its relationship with Greek forces and the

rest of the Allied forces. The study is included an introduction, four axes and a conclusion, the first axis showed an

overview of the roots of Greek-Australian relations until 1941, these relations date back to 1829, when seven Greek sailors emigrated and convicted of piracy by the British Naval Court, they were sentenced to be deported to New South Wales Southeastern Australia, on the official level in

1926, they did not have political relations deserve for studying and researching according to the point of view of the researcher, but they had economic relations that became more effective during the years (1937-1940), the second axis discussed the circumstances of sending Australian troops to Greece and its political and military consequences the British government has motivated Australian Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies, to send Australian troops in Greece and the Australian government promised to send more troops in Greece as well, and justified it as part of a "grand strategy" to delay Hitler's planned attack on the Soviet Union, but the British government was not honest with the Australian government, the Australian prime minister blamed the commander of Australian forces, Thomas Blame, the last blamed the Australian government, the Australian press showed that the Australian government does not have detailed information before sending troops. The third axis followed the problems which faced by the Australian forces in Greece, the most important were not the loyalties of the Greek officers united towards the political class, moreover, the equipping of the Greek army and air force was French, Czech and Polish weapons completely incompatible with British equipment, in the event of fighting, these weapons are exposed to rapid depletion and Greece was not prepared to buy or recycle weapons from the said countries, so it is obliged to base on British weapons and then the total dependence on the Australian forces in addition to not inform the Australian government on the details of the intelligence work of the Allies, The fourth axis studies the lack of coordination between the Australian and Greek forces and the end of the campaign, on more than one occasion, Greek forces had refused to cooperate with Australian forces on the ground, as well as the moral collapse of some Greek troops and ended the campaign with the occupation of German troops in Greece in 1941, The Australians lost 3,000 soldiers, most of them became German prisoners of war, the study is based on various foreign sources and references.

First: An Overview of the Roots of Greco-Australian Relations Until 1941:

Publically, Greek-Australian relations date back to 1829, when seven Greek sailors convicted of piracy by the British Naval Court. They were sentenced to be deported to New South Wales in Southeast Australia. Two of them settled in the Monaro lands. Migration increased in the second

half of the nineteenth century due to the discovery of gold in Australia ⁽¹⁾. Due to these migrations flowing into Australian territory, there was a large Greek community in the late 19th century. Thus, a group of honorary consulates was formed ⁽²⁾ in some Australian cities such as Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Those consulates had no official contact with the Greek government, and had no diplomatic representation at that time with the Australian government. Yet, the large increase in the number of Greek immigrants made the Greek community large in some Australian cities. As such, the Greek community in turn elected consuls to pursue its various activities on Australian land which continued until 1926.⁽³⁾ Before that, there was no formal relationships with Australia. Australia policy was contrasted towards Greek emigration especially in 1901. Australians were convinced of the possibility of benefiting from the efforts of the Greeks coming to Australia in the field of arduous work, including cutting reeds under hot

climatic circumstances. In World War I, some Australians feared that Greece could join to be within Germany, and the Greeks were subjected to persecution and extreme violence. In 1916, the Australian mob was shattered. , Greek cafes in Sydney, Melbourne, Kalgoorlie, Freeleagus Brother's, Brisbane City Cafe, and mobs led some demobilized Australian soldiers from military service and the Australian government did not protect the property of Greek families ⁽⁴⁾. On the other hand, the Allies deployed some Australian officers in Macedonia in northern Greece as part of the British military formations. Further, economic relations between the two countries became more effective during the years (1937). For example, the value of Australian wheat and wool exported to Greece during 1938-1939 amounted to three hundred and seven thousand Australian pounds, while imports from Greece amounted to 15 thousand Australian pounds, and the most important commodities imported capers, olives, leather, oil Olive, sponge and magnesium oxide, though From this trade, the vast majority of the Australian people had no information about Greek customs, traditions and language as well as the history of the political system in Greece. ⁽⁵⁾

Second: Circumstances of Sending Australian Troops to Greece and Their Political and Military Consequences:

The military relations between Australia and Greece began during the German military campaign against Greece in 1941. The British government played a twisted policy towards its allies on the Greek war especially the Australian and New Zealand forces. It gave them inaccurate information through its intelligence reports in the Balkans about their task in Greek territory. British intelligence was confident that the battle in Greece was inevitably lost. Yet, their insistence on sending

Australian troops to Greece was because of the promise made by the British government to the Greek government in 13th April 1939. This promise stated that Britain had to help Greece in the case of having a Germanic attack on it. The third Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, did not ask the British government for the presence of British ground troops in Greece but to provide them with weapons and military equipment in order not to undermine the confidence of the Greek government. On the other hand, the prestige and reputation of the British government remain. So the latter was compelled to abide by that agreement. ⁽⁶⁾ Furthermore, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden declared a justification for this failure five months after that campaign in September 1941. He reported that this campaign had its bad effects on Greece. Also, he noted the courage of the Greeks to defend themselves. Because of that outstanding defense for more than six more weeks, the timetable of Adolf Hitler's plans was tightened and the attack on the Soviet Union was delayed. The historical evidence confirms the invalidity of Aiden's justification since the climatic and weather circumstances are the main reason behind delaying the Germans' attack in 1941. ⁽⁷⁾

In early February 1941, Australian Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies visited Australian troops in the Middle East. On February 13 of that year, before leaving for London, General Archibald Wavell told him that he planned to send a military force to Greece. Five days later, on February 18, General Wavell spoke with the Australian commander, General Thomas Albert Blamey, about the proposed military operation in Greece. Actually, Blamey did not admire the proposed opinions regarding the military campaign. Yet he believed that Prime Minister Menzies agreed on it. ⁽⁸⁾ On the other

hand, the Australians discovered that the British government had deceived them with its promises that the mission

of the Australian forces was successful and not difficult. As he pointed out during his negotiations with the British government The British government promised the Australian government to send more troops to Greece, and reassured Greek Prime Minister Metaxas and the Greek army chief of staff Alexander Papagos that the border with Bulgaria could be secured by deploying Greek troops along the border. ⁽⁹⁾ It can be concluded that the British government was seeking by all means to stop the German military expansion towards Greece because of its geographical position. On the other hand, it wanted to control the military position, even at the expense of the loss of soldiers allies, especially Australians.

The Australian government suffered from the problem of not knowing the details of the intelligence work of the Allies despite providing them with insufficient information via telegrams sent by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Viscount Cranborne, in February 1941, which confirmed that there was no open debate. On the military reality in Greece, General Blamey was not fully assured of the British promises to send military reinforcements to Greece, and expressed this during a meeting in Cairo on March 6, 1941, with General Wavell to discuss the details of the tasks assigned to the military campaign in Greece. Plame stressed that the task of the campaign is almost impossible and expressed his view on the military operations in Greece, which is considered the most dangerous under the limited allied forces in Greece, Plame delayed the transfer of reservations to the Australian government, believing that His views against the campaign were not taken seriously by the Australian government, and news of that campaign caused widespread public outrage within Australia. On the other hand, the silence of Australian Prime Minister Menzies about participating in the Greek campaign, and his awareness of the dangers, could be explained by his fear of a possible Japanese attack on Australia, at which time Britain did not abandon the support of the Australian government. ⁽¹⁰⁾ It can be said that the Australian government had no prior knowledge about the Greek political and military reality, and indeed the

British government implicated the Australian troops in Greece, and it is certain that the Australian military commander Blamey did what was dictated by his conscience and acted professionally in conveying his reservations to that campaign even if it was delayed in The Australian government was unable to reject the British government's request to transfer its troops to Greece.

Deputy Prime Minister Arthur William Fadden expressed frustration at the British government's disregard for the Australian government's view of the military campaign. As a result, he sent a telegram to Prime Minister Menzies while in London on March 31, 1941, in which he expressed dissatisfaction with some discussions with the Allied Supreme Military Command, which neglected General Plame's view as commander-in-chief and did not heed his views on the campaign. Such matter makes the British government in a critical situation with The Parliament of Wallace Tralee ⁽¹¹⁾. It is clear from the foregoing that the British government did not convey the real view of General Blamey regarding participation in the military campaign in Greece.

Australian newspapers circulated rumors focused on not consulting the Australian government regarding the military campaign in Greece, and responded to those rumors Vadin through a press release on April 9, 1941, in which he explained that the Australian government had sufficient information and active in taking advice and search for information On the other hand, the result was tragic for the Australian forces. Sixty percent of the troops were captured by the German and Italian forces in that campaign. On the other hand, the Australian Military Council met and resulted in a statement issued on the 23rd of this year. In 1941, the statement blamed the military defeat in Greece on British politicians for their ill-considered intervention in Greece, and raised questions about the pressure of these politicians on military commanders to approve that unfortunate plan against the Axis forces. ⁽¹²⁾

Blamey's military prestige was reversed and the reputation of Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies was damaged. For example, on June 4, 1941, the Australian Workers' Journal reported that Allied losses were estimated at 15,000, while the number of Australian soldiers held by German troops was 10,000, the reckless and frivolous military adventure, already

condemned ⁽¹³⁾. On the other hand, Menzies blamed General Plame, whose work was supposed to be within the limits of his powers, and opposed by Gavin Merrick Long who stressed the need to bear Prime Minister the whole responsibility not to blame others especially the General Blamey. This may lead to the fact that the Australian government was not fully aware of the details of the military situation in Europe. Besides, there are problems between Australian and Greek officers that there were not enough translators in the campaign. This reduced the coordination between the two parties. The British government have deployed a few officers who spoke Greek in the Allied military formations. While the majority of British military officers who mastered the Greek or French, at the mission headquarters in Athens associated with the commander Or the Greek army, General Alexander Papagos, who kept them in his headquarters in Athens for the duration of the campaign. The British government did not invest the troops sent to Greece, which numbered four thousand six hundred and seventy soldiers in the subject of translation, especially since the three thousand Cypriots were speaking Greek and English fluently instead of exploring them in military purposes. ⁽¹⁴⁾ In addition, the weather conditions of rain and snow during the months of March and April 1941 played a negative role in transporting military equipment. The roads became muddy and slippery, and their mountain paths were too narrow to allow Donkeys and mules to walk on ⁽¹⁵⁾. It can be concluded from the above that all the circumstances were not in favor of the Australian troops sent to Greece, and the loss in that campaign does not mean that their military leadership was not at the required level, but the military reality faced by these forces inevitably that result in the floundering military decision of British policy in Greece Back then.

Third: Problems faced by Australian troops in Greece:

There were problems with the military command between the British forces in Greece. There was no central command of the Greek military operation; the headquarters was divided between the British, the Greeks and the Australians. For example, There are 80 plans belonging to the Royal Air Force of the British Marshal John Henry D'Albiac, at the disposal of the commander-in-chief of the Greek army, General Alexander Papagos, not under the command of the Allied Commander, General

Henry Maitland Wilson. Actually, this caused serious problems for the Allies. That is, British first bugs General Wilson was following orders from Australian commander General Plame to go to the 17th Brigade. Meanwhile, the Allied headquarters, led by General Wilson, were divided between a back seat of the Acropole Hotel in Athens and the village of Tsaritsani in the north. This is like an additional effort by General Wilson to receive the signals received ⁽¹⁶⁾. It seems that the military ambition of some British and Greek military commanders has negatively affected the performance of the Allied military forces, which facilitated the German occupation of Greece.

Greek officers' loyalties were not uniform to the political class, but the Australians were unaware of these political divisions. Furthermore, equipping the Greek army and air force with French, Czech, and Polish weapons was in complete contradiction with British equipment. ⁽¹⁷⁾ In the event of a fight, these weapons are rapidly penetrating. On the other hand, Greece is not ready to buy or recycle weapons from these countries, so it has to rely on British weapons if the British government agrees to equip them. further, Australian officers were not fully aware of Greek nature, climate and topography. The lack of adequate equipment by the Australian forces in light of the limited means of transportation compatible with the mountain war, as well as their lack of knowledge of the land routes and weapons held by the Greek forces, and even the maps on which they relied were old, so they found themselves in a vulnerable position on the Greek-Yugoslav border in the face of the enormous potential of German forces. Australian troops were confused and worried in a country that was supposed to be their allies. Strangely, some Greek youth groups were greeting fascists. The political reality proved that half of the Greeks were unpopular with British policy in Greece, which made Australian leaders unwilling to fight, as well as the spread of venereal diseases among their troops, as well as what the fifth column played in demoralizing them in a country that claimed to be At their side⁽¹⁸⁾.

It is safe to say that the Australian forces kept incorrect information about the Greek military reality by the British government. Its

leadership was controlled by the Greek political class, as well as the weapons it possessed that were not British and there were not enough ammunition for them. Therefore, the Greek government was forced to import British weapons, and trained its forces on them their factions the Australian government.

When the Australian troops arrived in Greece, the country was on the verge of financial collapse in the face of the great economic hardship suffered by Greece. Most of the country's money was used to build fortifications along the Greek-Bulgarian border, known as the Metaxas Line, and the rest of the country's resources were spent fighting the Italians on the Albanian border. By March 1941, the Greek army was exhausted by the six-month-long fighting. In Australia, however, the Australian General Sydney Fairbairn Rowell stressed that the Australian army does not know the Greek army's qualities, especially in terms of efficiency and organization. Yet the prevailing perception of the Australian army is the bright image of the Greek forces that fought Italian troops with unparalleled courage when The latter attempted to occupy Greece in October 1940. But those perceptions were dispelled when Greek forces were seen in the reality, there is no longer a military competence for Greek troops.⁽¹⁹⁾ It seems that the Australian forces painted a positive picture of the efficiency and ability of the Greek forces against the Axis countries, especially after their victory over the Italian forces, but that victory was a weakening of the Greek military forces that drained most of their weapons in the face of those forces, and shocked the leaders of the Australian forces when the actual level of the Greek forces when They became in direct contact with them on Greek land.

The Australian commanders attempted to explore the far north of Greece by going through General Thomas Blamey, commander of the Australian Legion, accompanied by Brigadier General Rowell on March 19, 1941. They met Greek military commanders and had very depressing perceptions of the Greek military reality.⁽²⁰⁾ Blamey considered the senior Greek officers he met lacked confidence and were not good⁽²¹⁾ Meanwhile, the first Australian Legion camp in the village of Gerania, south of Servia. Australian troops suffered greatly in that village, whose inhabitants were living primitive in disease-infected huts, particularly malaria, which had spread to the north of the Greece. Further, acute

intestinal infections infected a large number of Australian soldiers, and even water was contaminated by the spread of marshes and large marshes, flies in turn facilitated the transmission of diseases in that region⁽²²⁾. Poor weather circumstances have caused the spread of disease among the Australian forces and have significantly reduced the morale of Australian troops on Greek lands.

The planned deployment of Australian troops to Greek territory included a brigade in Verria Pass, a brigade in Kozani and a brigade in Cervia, and the 16th Australian brigade arrived in Greece on 22 March. 1941, under the command of Brigadier General Toby Arthur Samuel Allen. He explored the area, went to Cervia and then deployed his forces in the Fair Pass area in cooperation with the Greek forces of the 12th Division of Sofular. It is a village sixteen kilometers northeast of Kozani. The most strange thing is that the Greek contingent relied on the incoming Australian troops and it did not make the necessary preparations to counter the possible German exposure at the time, which was reflected in the distrust of the Australian leaders in the performance of the Greek military forces. They avoided cases where their soldiers had to get the support of the Greek forces⁽²³⁾. Roel was distrustful of the possibility that the 12th and 20th Greek divisions could remain in the places assigned to them near the Australian 19th Infantry Brigade.⁽²⁴⁾

General Blamey consulted the General Iven Giffard Mackay, who was the commander of the 6th Division of the Australian Army, in Giraniya, on April 5, 1941, regarding the late arrival of the 16th Brigade's to his position. The 19th and 17th Brigades had moved forward. They away from the port of Alexandria at the time, and on the same day, makes the situation more complex. the first meeting was held in Kozani between the Greek commander General Kotulas and the Allied Commander General Wilson. Major Miles Belfrage Reid, the senior British liaison officer whose role was to transfer military instructions to General Kutulas, was also present at the meeting. Major Miles was not convinced by General Kutulas and stated that he did not deserve that position.⁽²⁵⁾ General Kutoulas described the situation of the Greek army in Central Macedonia as in need of assistance, lacked organization and was keen to lead it. He explained that the Greeks were very weak on the ground and had only minor

reserves, while General Wilson gave the right to worry and refused General Kutoulas to transfer Australian troops to Fera bass before Commander of the arrival of the Australian band sixth⁽²⁶⁾.

In addition, General Wilson easily agreed to a common mission between Australian officers and Greek engineers to build a road north from Fera to Kozani behind the defensive line. He requested a drilling machine from General Kutoulas to complete the mission urgently by assisting civilian workers. At that meeting, General Kutoulas wanted to improve contacts with the Allied headquarters, and pointed out the need for a liaison officer (Greek) stationed in his headquarters in order to activate the contact with the Allied headquarters and General Wilson agreed about that. However, it is difficult to ascertain Kutoulas's request regarding appointing a Greek liaison officer, which was rejected because of incitement by General Blamey by telling General Wilson of General Kotolas's defeatist position. In 8 April 1941, Christos Karasos led the Greek 20th Division. It soon became clear that contacts between Australians and Greeks under a new command were no more successful. although the British formed a new section known as the Liaison Branch whose goal was to ensure the transfer of battle information as soon as possible between the military command in Greece and the headquarters of the military allies but the branch of communication failed to achieve its goal⁽²⁷⁾. On the other hand, German propaganda played a distinct role in the defeat of the Greek army morally even before the start of their attack on Greece. Further, Australian troops were let down by British government for the reason that it did not keep its promise to Australian troops. He did not send the Polish brigade to assist Australian troops because of his preoccupation with the German army's battles in North Africa, specifically in Cyrenaica in 6 April 1941.⁽²⁸⁾ It can be said that the headquarters of the Allies in Greece, its military estimates were not correct against the German forces. On the other hand, the majority of the Greek army is psychologically defeated under the great success of German propaganda.

Fourth: Lack of Coordination Between the Australian and Greek Forces and the End of the Campaign:

Australian troops were stationed along the Aliakmon line, the shortest line for German forces to attack Greece. It already attacked them on April

6, 1941, and invaded eastern Macedonia, creating loopholes exploited by the attacking forces and sending a convoy to Vardar and Monastir. The Anglo-Greek army was led by General Wilson from the east while the troops in Epirus, the Italians in the west, the British were forced to evacuate the Epirus after being surrounded by the German army. On the other hand, the Greek military commander Papagos refused to abandon the defense of Greece's eastern border with Bulgaria, arguing that it was too late to move his troops south to reinforce the Alikmon line. At that time, discussions were held to resolve the military situation in eastern Macedonia. The Greek army's positions had already been evacuated. Three main corridors in Greece, along with the troops there to increase their strength, in the northern part of Thessaloniki, were intended to encourage Yugoslavia to resist the German attack, and asked General Wilson to move the armored brigade to the nearest point of Thessaloniki. He did not believe in those procedures ⁽²⁹⁾.

Senior Australian leaders disagreed with the Greek war strategy. As a result, the coordination failed between Australian and Greek forces, although Australian officers wanted to have contact with the Greek army in Macedonia, but Australian officers had no idea of divisions within the Greek army or they worked alone and received no support from them. As well as having difficulty identifying enemy positions in rugged areas that can only be negotiated on foot by Australian liaison officers through muddy and snow-covered land. ⁽³⁰⁾

Australian leaders' worried about the German threat from the Yugoslav frontier was true. The Yugoslav resistance collapsed 48 hours after the Axis attack. General MacKay's reaction was to send most of the 19th brigade under General George Allen Fossie forward near the border with Yugoslavia to defend the area of Florina ⁽³¹⁾. While advancing to that area, the battalion number (2/8) was assigned to accompany those forces on the right. While the battalion number (2/4) was assigned to go to the left of those forces and the mission of Greek troops is to protect both sides. There is considerable controversy over the performance of the Australian forces, particularly the 2nd Battalion. There is evidence to indicate that their personnel panicked and quickly withdrew and quite a few of their soldiers gave up their weapons, and the rest of the Australian troops in great confusion. ⁽³²⁾

It can be said that the morale of the Australian forces has decreased significantly, especially after the news of the great victories achieved by the German forces in the Yugoslav land. The morale of the German forces was increased in facing of the military forces stationed on the Greek border. On the other hand, the Australian forces suffered another frustration in the absence of Some Greek leaders cooperated with them, especially General Papagos, so they were not keen on the land of the Greeks from the Greeks themselves.

The Greek army on the eastern land of Macedonia proved its worth against the expectations of the Australian military commanders as they faced the German forces and fought fiercely, but the German forces managed to break the Greek defenses despite their stubbornness in the eastern front which retained its positions for 36 hours. The main reason that led the fighters to fight in those The area is that the majority of Greek combatants are residents of the area under the command of Major General Constantinos Bakopoulos . He was forced to apply for surrender to German troops on the evening of April 8, 1941. Accordingly, he signed the surrender protocol on April 9 at the German consulate in Thessaloniki. ⁽³³⁾ It can be concluded from this that General Bakopoulos and his brave soldiers fought with courage and rare courage, but most of their troops were liquidated thanks to the heavy firepower of the 2nd German Armored Brigade, and in that ugly way the German forces advanced on Greek territory, and General Bakopoulos had no trick in the absence of support Land and air only sign a document of surrender with the Nazi forces.

General Mackay, commander of the Australian 6th Division to Perdika, was accompanied by General Karasos on April 9, 1941. General Mackay expressed frustration at the shortage of suitable interpreters for contacts with the Greek army. In the 10th April, the General Mackay had met Wilson in Perdika to study the military situation, especially after the German forces took control of the Greek town of Florina near the Yugoslav border, and chaos prevailed Greek forces. So, it was agreed to withdraw the 12th Greek contingents immediately from the site In Fera Pass to a site stretching from Kleissoura to the left of the Australian troops. They were entrusted with the task of protecting those forces to the 6th Australian Division and then retreating

from the Fermion-Feria area with caution to move to the Alikmon Line. On April 11th, the general Mackay insisted to have the responsibility for the withdrawal of Greek troops, especially since the Australian battalion (2/8) came under heavy attack by the German forces. Yet, the Greek forces, instead of following the orders of MacKay to withdraw slowly over three days, suddenly they disappeared. Such step gave way to the enemy to penetrate the territory Greek. In return, the general Papagos accused Australian troops that they give up Greek troops as they gave them hasty withdrawal orders.⁽³⁴⁾

Some of the forces of the 17th Australian Brigade landed on Greek territory on April 12, 1941, under the command of Brigadier Stanley Savig · notably the two battalions (2/5) and (2/6) of the 17th Brigade, While the Battalion (2/11), had not yet arrived in Greece, and Wilson was keen on the safety of the Allied forces after it became clear that the Greek army could no longer be relied upon as a combat force, and after much discussion between General Plame and Wilson, On 13 April of that year, Brig. Gen. Savage was asked to take responsibility for operations in Kalambaka, to cover the left side of the Allied forces withdrew, especially after the collapse of the Greek army in Epirus. When Savig arrived in Kalambaka, he met about 3,000 Greek soldiers who were in a collapsed spirits who met intelligence officers and interpreted what they told Brigadier General Savage that they had ordered to evacuate their positions, abandoned their weapons and forced them into Trikkala, On the other hand, General Savig went to the headquarters of the Greek military camp in a village near Kalambaka, in the late afternoon of April 15, for which Greek General George Tsolakoglou was in charge. From April he held a meeting with him He was asked to help him evacuate the Greek forces under his command as they were psychologically defeated. General Savig was convinced that General Tsulakoglu had no intention of fighting and evidence that he had ordered his troops to leave their equipment and evacuate their positions in Trikala under the pretext of re-equipping them.⁽³⁵⁾

The military situation worsened, especially when the 16th Australian Brigade came to assist the 21st New Zealand Battalion in the Pinios Gorge Strait in Vale of Tempe. They were assigned to cross the Pineos River but the German tanks were on a defensive position. The breach of

the New Zealand battalion (2/2), which caused panic among the ranks of the New Zealand troops that left their positions and allowed the German forces to advance as it passed through the railway, which led to the encirclement of the 16th Australian Brigade,⁽³⁶⁾ On the other hand battled the battalion Issue (2/4), with high professionalism despite being subjected to me The German forces lost many of their soldiers and greatly strained the other part of them near the river Aliakmon.⁽³⁷⁾ In front of those developments General Papagos informed General Wilson, in an emergency meeting held on April 16, 1941, outside the city of Lamia, The loss of the Greek army in the Klysora corridor and that the Western Macedonian division taken to the mountains are likely to turn into Kalambaka, and as a result it was decided to withdraw British troops on the night of April 16 to Thermopylae, and Wilson expressed concern about Reports from intelligence officers that the units contended The intention in a state of chaos came orders to Major Australian nineteenth to withdraw to a point determined by the Allied forces later⁽³⁸⁾.

In his correspondence with General Wilson during the period 17-20 April 1941, General Waffle asserted the complete collapse of the Greek forces in the face of the rapidly advancing German forces on Greek territory. The Greek forces, which abandoned their positions and did not resist the German forces, especially in Apiros,⁽³⁹⁾ Australian troops were stationed in the mountains and could not retain their positions because of the withdrawal of other troops from the southern coastal beaches in Greece, on the other hand S German armored teams provide good logistical support so the Australian troops did not withstand Greek territory.⁽⁴⁰⁾

German forces managed to take advantage of poor contact between Greek and Allied forces on the one hand, poor roads and railways in Greece, as well as a massive air assault by German forces that forced the defending forces to surrender. Successful fighting at the local level, but its withdrawal became inevitable, and began to withdraw to Athens on the twenty-fourth of April 1941, and then was evacuated fifty thousand Allied soldiers, and left some isolated groups, and the Greek people provided sanctuary to Some of the Allied soldiers fleeing the German forces, however, Australian forces succeeded in inflicting significant losses in the German paratroop battalion lost two-thirds of its men, fifteen thousand Allied fighters were evacuated aboard

Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy ships, and twelve thousand remained Allied forces, including 3,000 Australian soldiers, most became prisoners of war of the Germans.⁽⁴¹⁾ It can be concluded from this that the Australian forces in Greece, despite losing the war, fought honorably the military profession. As a result of their dedication to the fighting, it did not hesitate the majority of the Greek people to shelter some of the Australian soldiers who were stranded, as proof that the majority of the Greek people respected the Australian troops that defended their land.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has concluded the following:

- The research proved that the Australian forces in Greece did not go in their desire but the pressure of the British government on the Australian government and shadowing the military facts in Greece.
- The research revealed the moral collapse of most Greek military forces and their lack of cooperation with the Australian military leaders in the face of the German occupation of Greece.
- The research showed the inefficiency of most of the Greek military leaders, which caused the embarrassment of the Australian military leaders in front of their soldiers in Greece.
- The research study confirms the confusion of the headquarters of the Allies in Greece in making military decisions, and some decisions in which courtesies favor the Greek military leaders at the expense of the Australian forces and the rest of the Allied forces on Greek soil.
- The research shows the professional fighting of the Australian forces, although they did not defend their territories, but it was the honor of the military profession that necessitated them. In contrast, they did not forget the Greek people.

NOTES

1. For more details on Greek immigration to Australia see:
Souvlakia Yassou, and, Paniyiri. (2004). **Adapting Greek Culture for Australians**. Sue Keays School of Humanities and Human Services Queensland University of Technology, Paper presented to the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Centre for Social Change

Research Queensland University of Technology 29 October 2004, p. p. 2-9.

2. The formal diplomatic relations between Australia and Greece began when the Greek Government appointed a consulate in Sydney, in May 1926, and entrusted Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos to administer it as Consul General of the Greek Government. This was followed by a series of Greek consuls, and the development of Greek diplomatic representation to the level of an embassy by the appointment of Dimitrios Lambros (Ambassador of Greece in the Australian city of Canberra, in the opening of the Australian Embassy in Athens and served as Ambassador Alfred Stirling) On the ninth of March 1964 for further details seen:

<http://www.mfa.gr/australia/en/the-embassy/history/consular-and-diplomatic-presence-of-greece-in-australia.html>.

3. Ibid.

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