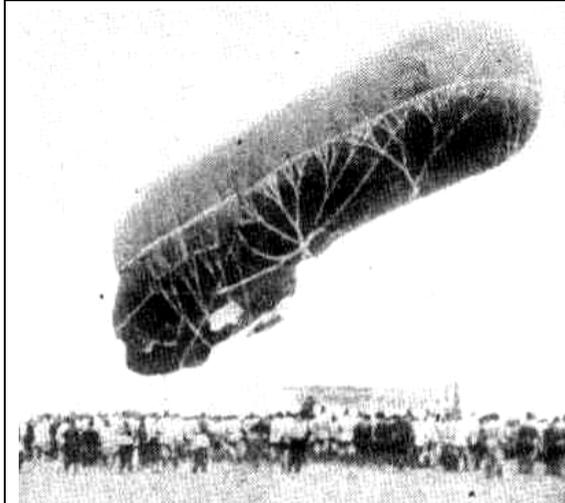
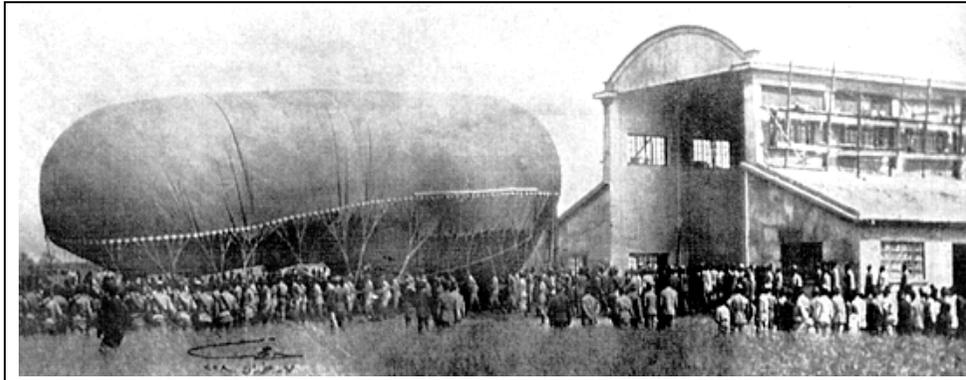


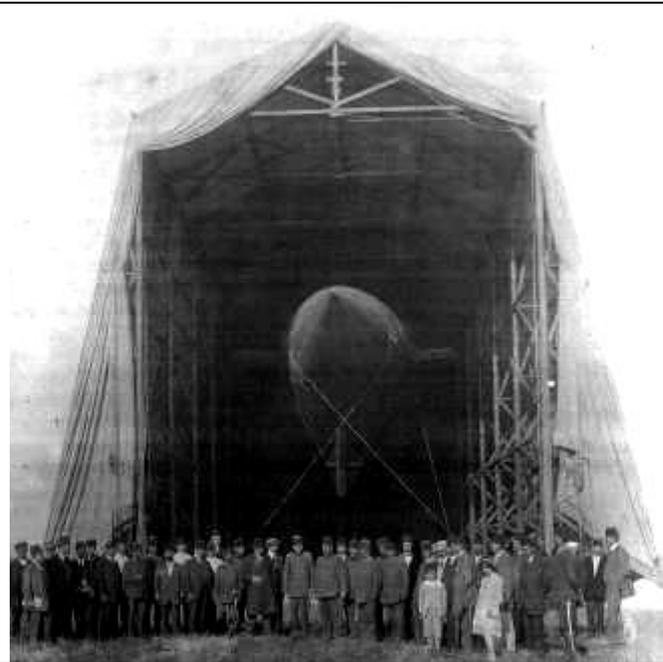
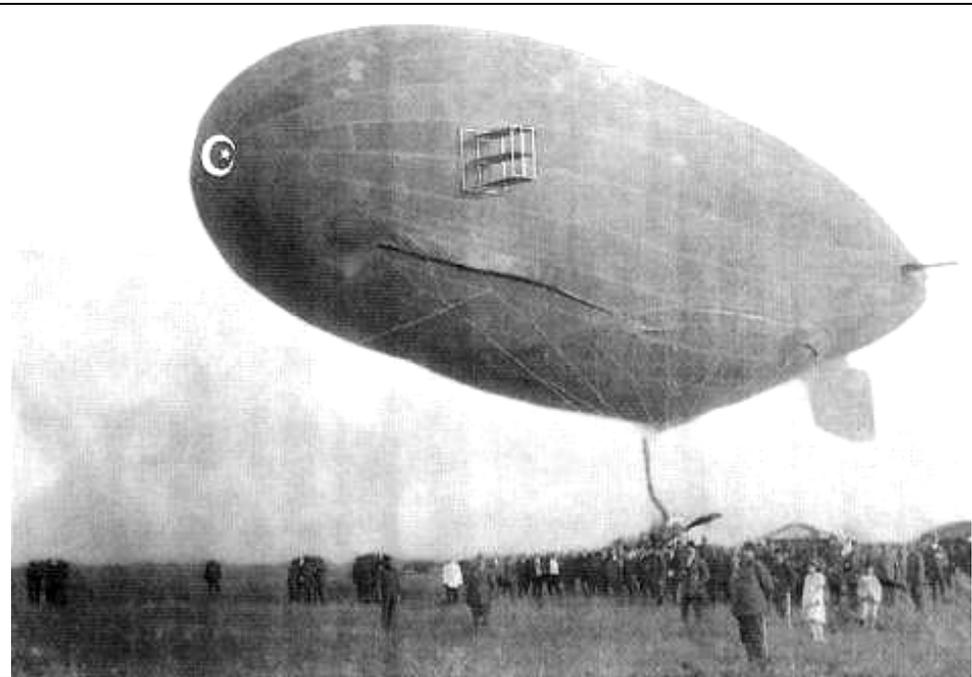
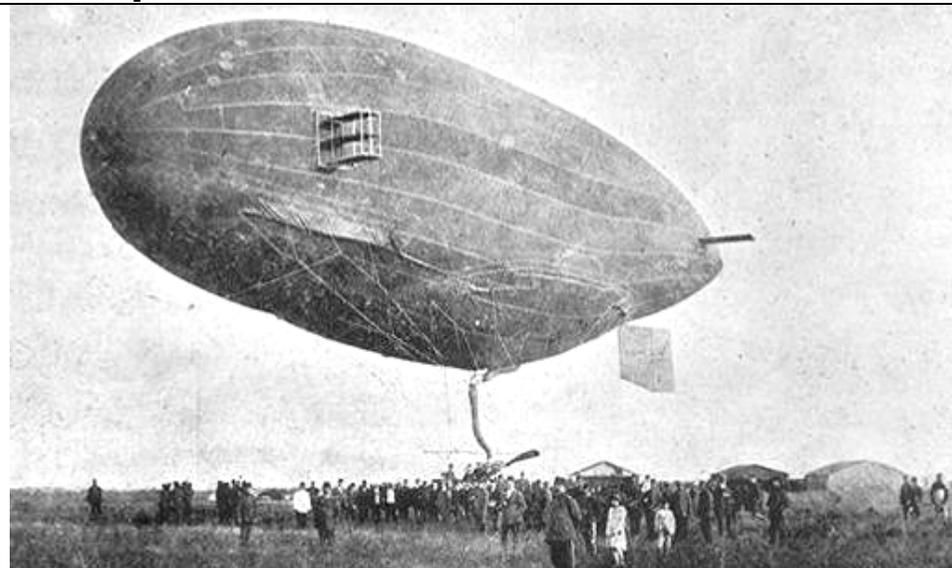
# BALLOONS and AIRSHIPS

## Balloons





# Airships



# A short overview of Ottoman balloon operations in 1.WW.

Sources: "Havacilik Tarihinde Turkler-1 (publ.1970)", "Turk Havacilik Tarihi 1914-1916 (publ.1951)

The Ottoman Army acquired in June 1912 a 750m<sup>3</sup> observation balloon from Germany for use in the fortress city of Edirne. Later in the fall of 1912 being under siege of the Bulgarian forces the balloon was desperately launched-for the first and last time on 6. of November 1912 despite being only partly inflated.

On 26 March 1913 Edirne fell, but on its recapture on 22. of July the balloon and its associated equipment for gas manufacture was found in situ. The balloon was in early 1914 transported to Istanbul where it constituted the sole equipment of the "Sabit Balon Müfrezesi" (Tethered Captive Balloon Detachment).

Also in 1913 the Ottoman Army took possession of a Parceval Airship number PL.9 which had originally been planned procured to obtain contact with the Turkish forces in Libya which had been attacked by Italian forces. The Turkish forces had since then surrendered, but the airship was delivered anyway in August 1913 and an experienced German Airship pilot, Hachstetter was hired with a small crew. The airship was flown for the first time on August 5<sup>th</sup> in a 1 hour 12 minutes flight. During the next ten days it made an additional two flights in the vicinity of Istanbul. A huge hanger was built at Yeşilköy in only 28 days to house the airship. Unfortunately after this and until the 1.WW erupted it became impossible to obtain the necessary spare parts for it and it remained grounded for ever.

When the landings at Gallipoli took place in April 1915 the Turkish Army was in dire need of aircraft and other equipment which could only with great difficulty be moved from Germany to Turkey.

It was only in July that modern aircraft in some numbers arrived at the Front at Gallipoli. At the time the Turkish aircraft were neither equipped with weapons nor telegraph equipment so Mj. Serno the chief of aviation forces ordered the Edirne balloon which had been made ready for flight in Istanbul to the front. In the first week of July it arrived at the front at Kilya Tepe defended by an anti-aircraft battery. On July 18<sup>th</sup> the British attacked the area with bombs and darts and Serno himself was attacked by a machinegun equipped aircraft. Although it was not damaged, it was felt that under those circumstances the balloon would be too vulnerable and it was shipped back to Istanbul.

A few days later the unit now called the 1nci Sabit Balon Bölüğü (1<sup>st</sup> tethered Balloon Company) was allocated to the naval defences at the mouth of Bosphorus in the Black Sea at Beykoz. It made its first ascend there to 400 meters on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1915 carrying two officer observers.

Here the balloon unit stayed until the end of 1916. After the Turkish Army had defeated the British Army at Kut on the Iraqi front in April 1916 the Turkish defences later in the year came under increased pressure and it was requested that two aircraft companies and a balloon unit supported by anti-aircraft guns be sent there. Consequently the 1<sup>st</sup> Balloon company was shipped from its base at Beykoz towards Iraq at the end of the year 1916. The travel to there was not easy for the unit's 6 officers and 111 men and when they arrived at the railway station at Cerablus in Syria several months later the situation had changed and Baghdad fallen to the British. There were now plans to send the unit to Tikrit, but the necessary transport could not be arranged and in January 1918 the personnel was returned to Istanbul. The fate of the balloon is not known.

Meanwhile here additional equipment had arrived from Germany and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Balloon Companies could be formed, the first with two 800m<sup>3</sup> balloons and the second with two 950m<sup>3</sup> balloons. Meanwhile a small Corps of balloon observer officers had been trained. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Balloon Company was sent to Izmir and arrived there on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1918. Later in the year when the 17<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was moved from there to Istanbul it followed with it. When the armistice came the equipment was stored and its further fate is unknown.