

Arditi In The Military



This photograph was taken with my dear friend Sami Day. Like me, Sami Day was also a friend native to Haydarpaşa. When we were in Istanbul Teknik Üniversitesi (Technical University of Istanbul), we used to go to summer military camps. The special feature of these camps was that it wasn't just attended by people from our school but different schools as well. I was from ITU, my friend Sami Day was from Yüksek Ticaret Okulu (School of Higher Commerce). I have very interesting memories about my term in the military. After my training, I was given a diploma that stated my graduation status as a reserve officer. It also says "very good," referring to the degree with which I finished my term. I was enlisted in the military in 1950 as a reserve officer. I actually was enlisted before my mandatory military attendance date. I tried to network as much as I could so that I could finish my military term as quickly as possible. I began my military duties as a naval officer first (assigned to me by lottery). There were not any ranks in the naval forces in regards to architectural engineering, so I was ordered to wear the uniform of ground forces. I worked in the construction of a building in Heybeliada that is currently used as a military school. My commanding officers really liked my work, so they asked me what I wanted in return. One of my painter friends was also in the military at the time. I asked my officers if it was possible to station my friend to my unit so that he could help me with the drawings for the construction. In this respect, I was able to facilitate the relocation of one of my friends, and have him work with me. I knew he was having a very difficult time at his previous location. On Election Day, which resulted in a victory for the Democrats, a curfew was enacted for military officers. We could not go out on the streets, so I was sitting at the military headquarters. My commanding officer, who was residing at a nearby building close to sea level, summoned me to his quarters. I received permission to leave, and went to see

him. I remember seeing a high-rank officer sitting across from my commander. My commander asked the officer to leave, so I could sit down. Rank is a very important concept in the military. To be honest, I was scared because I did not know what to expect. In the meantime, the soldiers in the streets were busy with preparation efforts for the 19 May national holiday. They were performing acrobatic dances on a large, iron construction. My commander asked me whether I thought the construction was strong. I told him that I did not think the construction was sufficiently solid, and that there was a very good chance it could cave in. I also walked him through the steps that should be taken in order to make it stronger and more durable. In this way, I was able to correct some of the construction mistakes, and prevent a possible disaster from ever happening. My observation on this matter was very well received by my commander.