

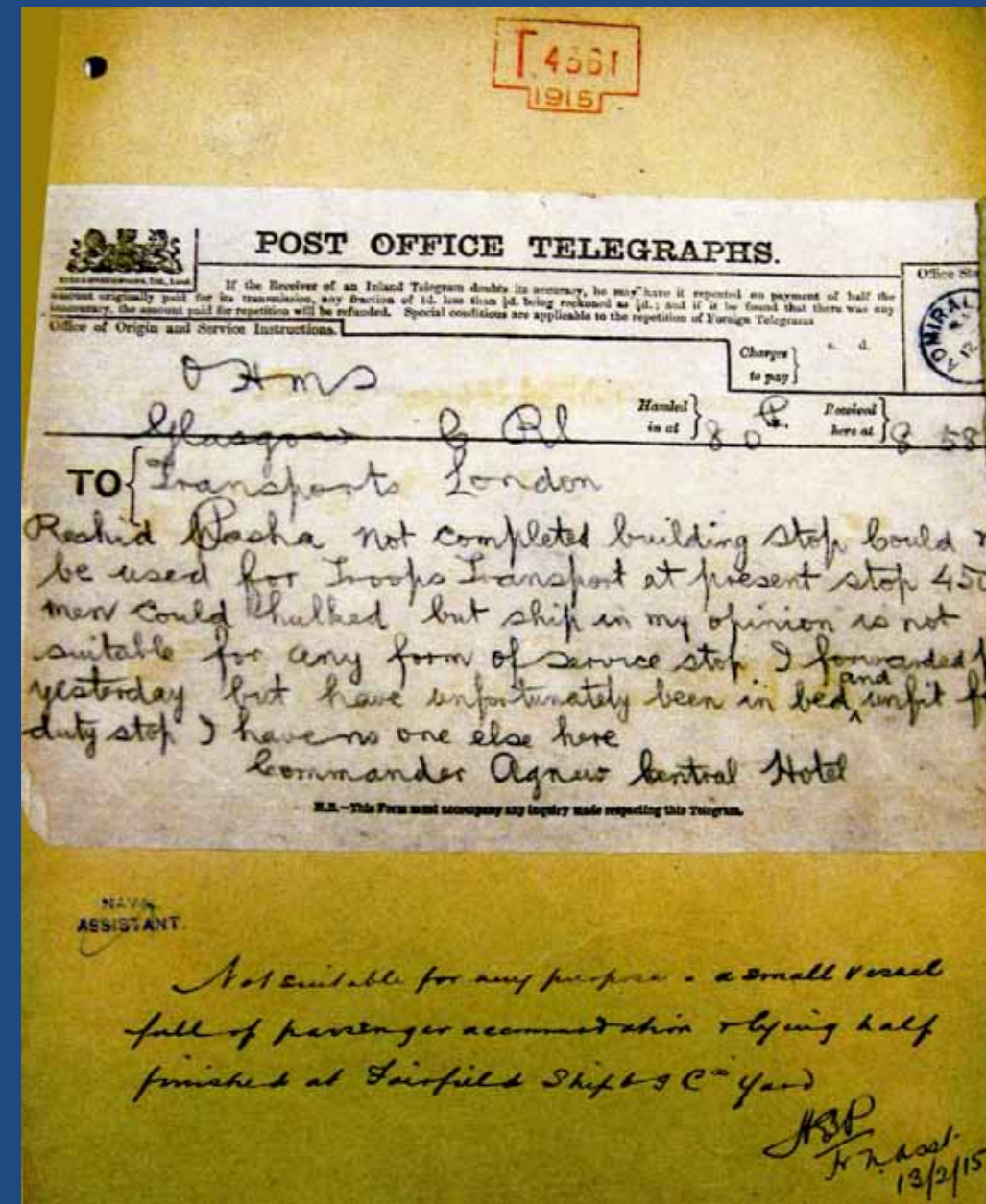


2016

Sailing today as a luxury yacht, motor vessel Halas was built as the Bosphorus ferry Resit Pasha at Fairfield in 1914.

from Govan to GALLIPOLI

Fairfield-built over 100 years ago and still going strong



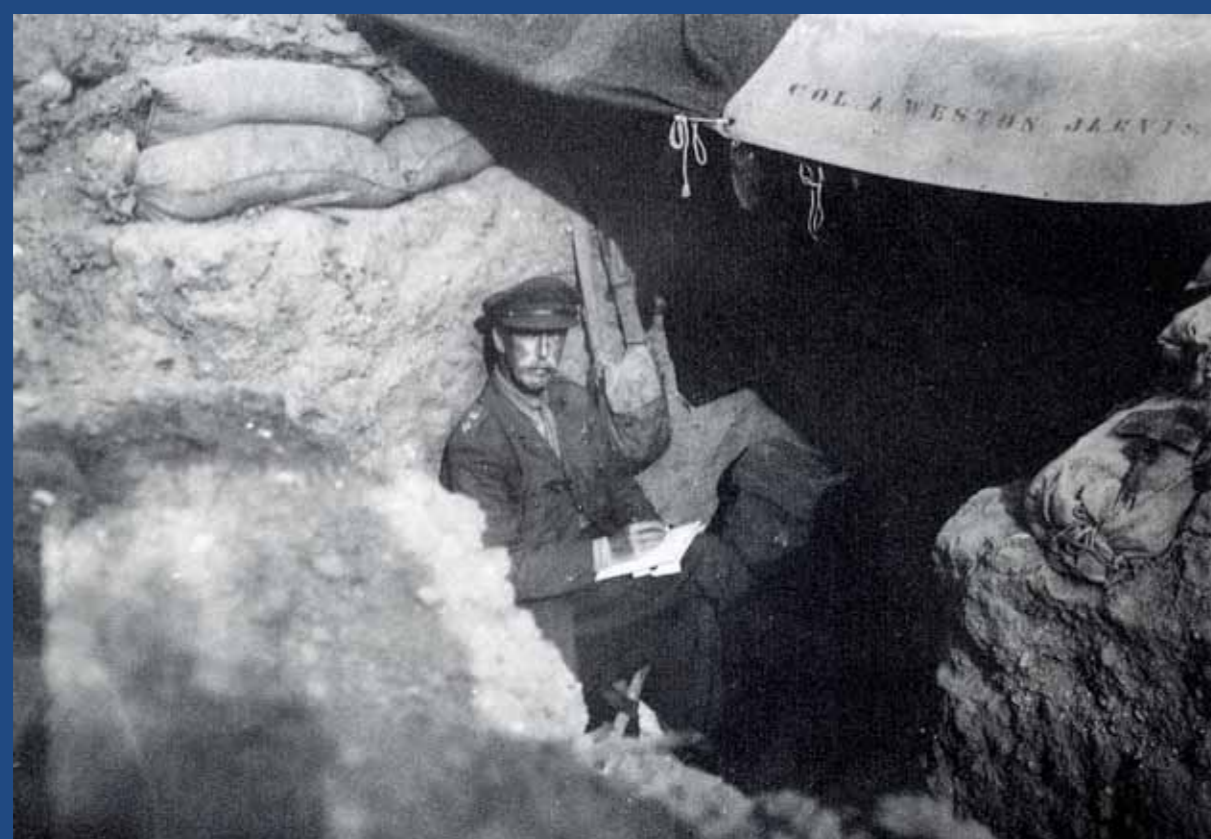
'not suitable for any purpose'

The telegram above provides the initial assessment for war work made of the incomplete ferry Resit Pasha by an Admiralty overseer at Fairfield's in January 1915. At this time Anglo-French plans for a daring attack on the Ottoman Empire in the Dardanelles were being finalised which would identify a role for the little ferry as a tender transporting men and materials.

Remarkably, the ship built by Fairfield in 1914 which served at Gallipoli as RFA *Waterwitch* has survived various incarnations and sails today on the Mediterranean as the pleasure cruiser *Halas*. Only two other ships have survived Gallipoli to the present day: the British monitor *M33* now preserved at Portsmouth Dockyard and the Turkish minelayer *Nusrat* which is now a museum ship at Tarsus. This small passenger ferry was built by the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. (Ship No. 502) for Şirket-i Hayriye, of Istanbul as *No. 73 Resit Pasha*. She was launched on the 17 October 1914 by which time World War One was almost three months old. In common with many ships under construction for home and foreign owners during the war, this ship was taken over by the Admiralty in November 1914 during fitting-out. Initially, however, the vessel was thought to be of no use to the armed forces whatsoever as the telegram opposite demonstrates.

Gallipoli

Ironically, Fairfield's ship no. 502 was destined to be part of the war effort in the very country for which she was originally built, as the Ottoman Empire was now the enemy. On completion she was renamed *Waterwitch*. She sailed out to the Dardanelles where she became part of the great but disastrous Anglo-French invasion of Turkey that began early in 1915. Her shallow draught made her ideal for inshore work as large troop-carrying vessels couldn't get near the shore. Vessels such as *Waterwitch* basically carried out a 'bus service' for troops and supplies taking them from larger ships to the shore. On 8 August 1915, for example, men of the Isle of Wight Rifles embarked on ships which sailed to Imbros off the coast of Gallipoli. There, the men transferred to smaller ships, in this case *Waterwitch*, for the final part of their journey to the beaches of Suvla Bay. The abortive Gallipoli campaign ended in January 1916 and from there *Waterwitch* was sent to Thessalonika.



Colonel A Weston Jarvis, commander of the London Yeomanry in his dugout. His troops were transported by *Waterwitch*.



This photo shows men of the London Yeomanry boarding *Waterwitch* at Gallipoli in November 1915.

The Occupation of Istanbul

After WW1 ended, the Ottoman Empire was broken up and the map of the Middle East redrawn in a way that is recognisable today. While this prolonged process was underway, French, British and Italian troops occupied Istanbul (known also as Constantinople until 1930), capital of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish War of Independence led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, resulted in the formation of Turkey as a modern state in 1923. During this period *Waterwitch* was stationed near Istanbul.

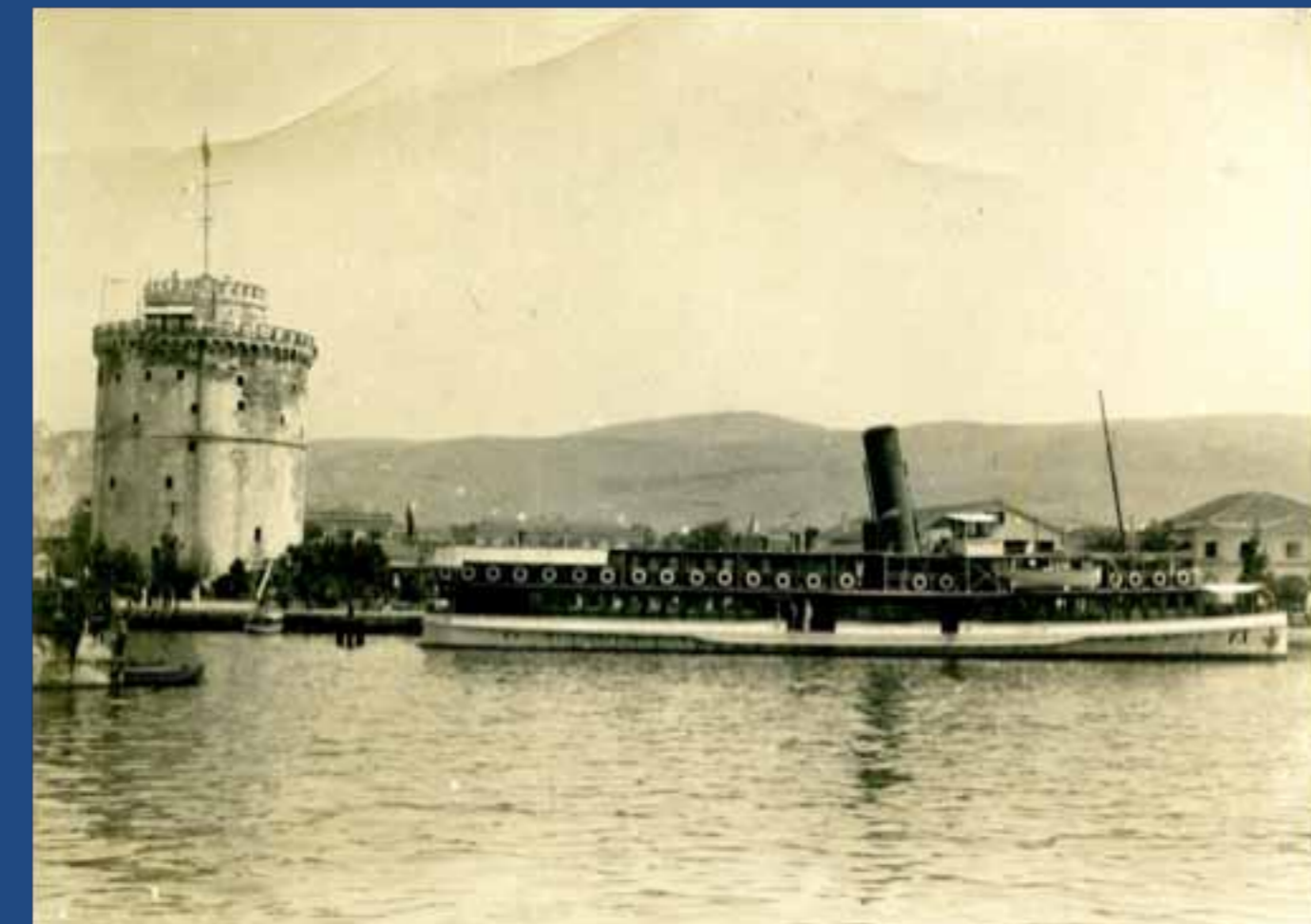
In 1918/19 *Waterwitch* was under the command of Lieutenant Loveluck although this was purely by chance as her intended captain, Lieutenant Philip Bisson, died when the ship that was taking him to his new command was torpedoed. John Edward Loveluck happened to be at Mudros on the island of Lemnos, where *Waterwitch* was moored and was given the command on 28 January 1918. Under his command, *Waterwitch* supported British forces occupying Istanbul.



Waterwitch off Thessalonika.



Waterwitch in Istanbul during the Anglo-French occupation 1918-23.



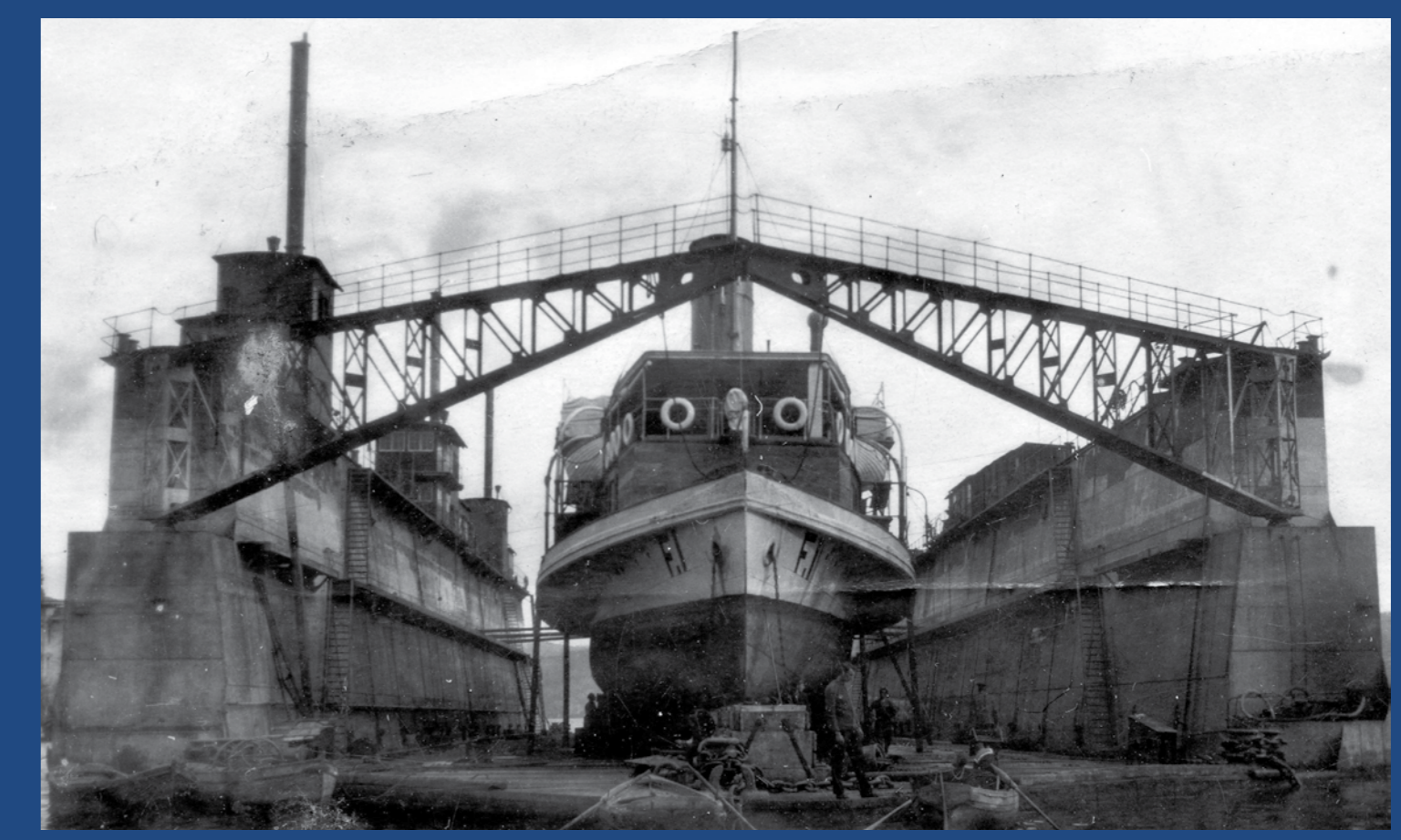
Waterwitch moored by Thessalonika's "White Tower", 1916.



Lieutenant John Edward Loveluck, captain of *Waterwitch* 1918-1919.

Normal Service as a Ferry

After the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, *Waterwitch* was handed over to the Bosphorus Steam Navigation Company, and re-named *Bosphorus No 71 Halas*. Halas meaning deliverance. For the next sixty years the little Fairfield built ferry transported millions of passengers across the Bosphorus at Istanbul. In 1944 she was renamed *Bosphorus No. 71* and in 1952, *No. 71 Halas*.



Waterwitch in an Admiralty floating dock (AFD) probably at Mudros.



A painting of *Halas* in ferry service on the Bosphorus.



Officers of *Waterwitch* in Istanbul 1918.

Today: a life of luxury as MV Halas

In 1984 *Halas*, as she was now named, had reached the end of her life as a ferry and was laid up pending probable demolition. It was at this point that Turkish publisher Haldun Simavi and his wife Cigdem rescued the ship from the breakers yard and converted her into a luxury yacht for cruising off Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The conversion meant replacing her original twin screw, triple expansion steam machinery manufactured by Fairfield in 1914 with more efficient twin diesel engines.

In 2009 she was again refitted this time as a motor yacht by new owners, Caroline and Mustafa Koc. Today, *Halas* operates commercially out of Istanbul as a luxury coastal cruising ship and a unique location for special events.

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