

**CAPTAIN NIKIFOROS
(DIMITRIS DIMITRIOU)**



Dimitris Dimitriou, born 1921, was a Greek military officer who served in World War II against the Italian Forces as a lieutenant of the Greek Cavalry Force and later in a Heavy Artillery battalion during the fight against the German Army in Northern Greece.

After the surrender of the Greek army, he was of the first Military Academy-trained soldiers to enter armed guerrilla resistance as part of the National Liberation Army (ELAS), where he changed his name to Captain Nikiforos ('he who bears victory').

Nikiforos was well-known for his armed resistance against the Axis forces in occupied Greece and for his involvement in the explosion of the Gorgopotamos Bridge, known as Operation Harling.

Operation Harling, known as the **Battle of Gorgopotamos** in Greece, was a World War II mission by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), in cooperation with the Greek Resistance groups EDES and ELAS, which destroyed the heavily guarded Gorgopotamos viaduct in Central Greece on 25 November 1942. This was one of the first major sabotage acts in Axis-occupied Europe.

The force available for the operation numbered 150 men: the twelve-strong British team, which would form the demolition party, 86 ELAS men and 52 EDES men, who would provide cover and neutralize the garrison. Nikiforos was part of the ELAS Group that was commissioned to take out the north outpost garrison.

According to the plan, the attack was to take place on 23:00 on 25 November. The attack on the garrison outposts on the two ends of the bridge began as scheduled, but went on far longer than the time originally allotted. It was with the courageous military leadership of Nikiforos that the outposts were finally destroyed and the Operation could proceed to become successful and a major setback to German supplies of Northern Africa Axis forces.

After the end of World War II, Nikiforos was imprisoned as a result of the Greek Civil War that followed directly after the Great War and was released in 1952. He went on to become an active political voice and a prolific author. He died in 2000 recognised by both friends and foes for his contribution to the Greek Resistance.

Sources:

<https://ethniki-antistasi-dse.gr/kapetan-nikiforos.html>

[https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AE%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%82_%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B7%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85_\(%CE%9D%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%86%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%82\)#%CE%A0%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%AD%CF%82](https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AE%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%82_%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B7%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85_(%CE%9D%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%86%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%82)#%CE%A0%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%AD%CF%82)

Story on Dimitris Dimitriou, alias Captain Nikiforos

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A letter to his family

Introduction:

Captain Nikiforos was one of the first military academy-trained soldiers and played a big role in the Greek resistance, but after WW II he was imprisoned during the Greek civil war for being a guerrilla fighter and a communist.

Nikiforos means “the man who brings victory”.

January 1946

Dear family,

first of all let me reassure you that I am still at a rather good health. But it is very cold here and they don't give us much food, so I am constantly hungry. But there is nothing to worry about. I survived the cold winters during war without having anything to eat for days, so this situation won't kill me.

But I feel terribly lonely. The man who was with me until yesterday was tortured and died last night. I fear that I will be the next one who they get to torture, but please don't worry about me. I am sure I will survive. I still don't believe that they will keep me in prison for a long time. I did so many things for my country to fight the Nazis ... and now this? Surviving the war to die in prison? No, I don't think they will and can do that.

But enough about me. How is Dad? Have you managed to finish the house yet? And did Roza give birth to her child and which name will you give the baby?

If there is a chance, please write letters as often as you can. That will help me get over my loneliness and will give me strength to survive.

Your loving son, brother and brother-in-law
Dimitris