

411:1

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 **Editorial**, 31 December 2014

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For years this and its several variations have been top of the chart for Turkey's propagandists, apologists, and Genocide deniers. There's no doubt the tiresome sing-song will continue to be a hit next year as Ankara continues its inane campaign against the Armenians as the latter commemorate the centennial of the Genocide.

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Because third-party followers of the news don't know the truth about the above Turkish macabre tale and next year might give credence to the Turkish mythinformation, Armenians need to have a synopsis of the facts at their finger tips when they tell non-Armenians what truly happened. They need a narrative which is short, to the point, and accurate.

The below statistics tell the truth loud and clear. They can be told within a minute or two—without confusing third parties with an avalanche of information.

At the beginning of 1915 the Ottoman Army had 2,873,000 officers and conscripts. In addition, it had several thousand German specialists and senior officers. The Ottoman Army was a professional military force and was equipped with modern weapons mostly supplied by its German ally. It had machine guns and cannons, modern telecommunication systems and an infrastructure (ex. medical care, food) to carry on a modern war.

In addition, the Ottoman Army was buttressed by recently-released convicts who were armed and given a free hand to eliminate the Armenians, including women and children. Lastly, there were the countless Kurds who were also armed and encouraged to kill the "infidel" Armenians.

And how many Armenian *fedayeen* fighters were there at the beginning of 1915? The highest estimate is around 7,000, spread across a vast territory. Unlike the Turks and Germans, they were amateurs and were armed with outdated weapons, home-made guns and had little ammunition. They had no modern communication network or medical support. For example, during the Van resistance, fewer than 1,500 Armenian combatants faced 15,960 Turkish soldiers in addition to Kurdish fighters. The latter had been given 24,000 rifles by the authorities. The Armenians had 505 rifles, 720 Mauser pistols, and a small supply of ammunition.

Putting aside the uncounted number of Kurds, the convicts, the riff-raff, the *Hamidiyes*, and the Germans, in 1915 some 7,000 Armenian amateurs "fought" a professional force of 2,873,000. That's a ratio of 411:1.

Yet, according to Turkey, this ragtag handful of Armenian amateurs were about to break up the Ottoman Empire. To accomplish that fantasy, each Armenian fighter had to kill 411 Ottoman soldiers without suffering a single loss. Not even a superhero conflation of Hercules, Superman, Lawrence of Arabia, the Red Baron, Billy Bishop, and Hollywood fantasy heroes could accomplish that magnitude of kill ratio.

There's a "kicker" addendum to the above facts: Armenians were considered by the Ottomans as the loyal ethnic group. Armenians meekly went about minding their own business. Overtaxed, abused, harassed... they bent their heads and obeyed the unjust laws of the Ottomans. But despite their loyalty and vast and diverse contributions to the empire, they were discriminated, oppressed, looted, killed...

So why should Turkish authorities be surprised that some frustrated Armenians—a minute minority—would conclude that the only way to get the attention of the Sublime Porte was to defend their communities from quotidian Turkish depredations?

The puzzle is that only 7,000 Armenians took up arms.

Seven-thousand amateurs against 2,873,000 professionals.

One against four-hundred and eleven.

Some conspiracy to destroy the Ottoman Empire.

Some excuse for eliminating a nation.

Remember these statistics next time you hear about the "Great Armenian Conspiracy to Destroy the Ottoman Empire" malarkey.

