A Medal That Should Not Be

C. V. Kelly

In 1936, General Ioannis Metaxas was elected Premier of the newly restored Kingdom of Greece. A great admirer of both Mussolini and Hitler, he founded a Fascist style party, and government, under his leadership on August 4, 1936. An affiliated Fascist-type youth organization was founded by Alekos Kanellopulos, the National Youth Organization (Etnike Organosis Neolaias), usually known by its initials, E. O. N.

The Etnike Organosis Neolaias issued a number of medals, including the Medal of the Fourth of August, which also seems to be known as the Order of the Phalanx, that was struck to celebrate the fourth year anniversary of the founding of Metaxas’ Fascist Party. It was to be awarded on the anniversary of the founding of the Etnike Organosis Neolaias on November 4, 1940. However, on October 28, 1940, the anniversary of his “March on Rome,” Mussolini unexpectedly invaded Greece, much to his later regret. Because of the invasion, the Etnike Organosis Neolaias cancelled the award of the Fourth of August Medal, and supposedly all examples of the medal were donated to the government to be melted down to manufacture cartridges for the Greek Army. It would appear that at least one of them missed the melting pot!

The Fourth of August Medal was to be awarded in three classes: gold (gilt), silver and copper. My medal is of the gold grade (Figure 1), 40mm wide, a Bath cross in white enamel, having the spaces between the arms filled by a solid rayed-background enclosed by gold laurel leaves, giving the planchet a modified octagonal shape. In the center of the cross is a numeral 4 filled with light blue enamel. The Greek word for AUGUST in gold letters appears across the horizontal arms of the cross. At the top and the bottom of the vertical arms are gold representations of the two-bladed Greek Fascist emblem. The reverse of the medal (Figure 2) is all gilt with the two-bladed Fascist emblem in the center, encircled by a wreath of laurel leaves, topped by a Greek Royal crown. The intended ribbon had five pale blue stripes and four white stripes, all of equal width.

![Figure 1: Obverse of the Fourth of August Medal.](image1)

![Figure 2: Reverse of the Fourth of August Medal.](image2)

This would appear to be a scarce medal as all should have been destroyed and it is doubtful that many exist, even in collections in Greece. The photos for this article are by Ron Leverenz of Doughboy Militaria, Springfield, Missouri.
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